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LOW Caricature: Ernest Bevin

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THERE is no sign that the cause of peace and goodwill has been advanced during the Christmas holiday. It was given out at the end of last week that Sir John Simon's talks in Paris had reassured the French about the policy of the British Government. If that is true, and if the Quai d'Orsay really knows what the British policy is, then it is better informed than the British public. Meanwhile, the direct exchanges between Paris and Berlin seem to have produced nothing but a hardening of hearts. The French Cabinet on Wednesday drew up its reply to Herr Hitler's proposals, and that reply, though it may not close the door to further negotiations, cannot be palatable to the Germans. The French still insist that there must be disarmament and not re-armament, and that anything that is done must be done within the framework of the League of Nations. The Germans have abated none of their hostility to the League, and unless Mussolini suddenly changes his mind, the Disarmament Conference will re-assemble next month only to re-adjourn.

The French Railway Disaster

International anxieties have for the moment been put into the shade by the appalling domestic catastrophe in France. The railway accident at Lagny left the whole world aghast with horror and pity, which all the circumstances combined to enhance. Of its causes we cannot yet say anything certain, except that the collision happened in a fog, and that the Strasburg express was travelling at a speed which, considering the weather conditions, seems excessive. The train was late, and the driver was doing what French drivers are encouraged to do—earning a bonus for making up time. Though blame may not attach to him for that, it may well attach to the system. But even so, there would presumably have been no accident if the signals had been working perfectly (and if, of course, there was no remissness on the part of the driver of the express. The signals on the Chemin de Fer de l'Est are highly mechanised, and were believed to give the highest possible degree of safety. If there was a failure of one of the mechanical devices, perhaps through the frost (whether that was so or not will be established, we presume, by the official inquiry), then it will be a question of discovering a still more elaborate automatism or of relying more on human precautions. But, in the last resort, since most of us demand speed as well as safety, most of us will take risks.

President Roosevelt and His Critics

The American political situation is now dominated by the approach of the time when President Roosevelt must meet Congress to give an account of his stewardship and ask for such further powers as he requires. By ratifying the silver agreement he has made fairly sure of the support

of the silver-producing States; and the "sound money" men are not likely to be so troublesome in Congress as outside. It looks as if the chief trouble will come from the representatives of small-scale industry and trade, who complain that the N.R.A. has been worked all in favour of Big Business and at their expense. Some of them, headed by Senator Borah, are demanding the reinstatement of the Sherman Anti-Trust Law. This they are most unlikely to get; for release from the Sherman Law is the chief advantage that has reconciled the big firms to the N.R.A., and the President can hardly be expected to throw away the support which he enjoys in that quarter. Something, however, will have to be done to placate the small men; and it is suggested that the administration of the N.R.A. will be modified so as to increase their influence. Meanwhile, the blanket code is being extended for a further period, and an effort is being made to bring more firms under it. Labour, which is restive, may get further wage-concessions; and the President will ask Congress for large new powers, including power to deal with banking reorganisation and to negotiate fresh trade treaties on a reciprocal basis. The Roosevelt plan is entering on a new stage; and there is not much doubt, despite the many sectional discontents, that Congress will give the President practically whatever powers he chooses to demand.

Spanish Politics

The new Government of Spain has been carefully selected from the Radical (centre) party, the Right Wing groups having only one representative in the Cabinet. Thus the Socialists are deprived of the opportunity of representing the ministry as practically monarchist. Señor Gil Robles, the energetic young leader of Acción Popular Agraria (the largest minority in the Cortes), has expressed his party's readiness to support the Republic, but without at present accepting the responsibilities of office. Such support is, however, conditional on the Lerroux Government respecting the "definitely expressed desire of the electorate for a rectification of the policy of the last two years," particularly a moderation of the anti-clerical clauses of the Constitution. Señor Gil Robles is meeting with criticism not only from his avowed enemies, the Socialists, but from within the camp of the Right, where complaint is heard that Catholics subscribed to the party funds for the purpose of fighting the Republic, and that such subscribers have no wish to hobnob with Freemasons, Jews and the International. Señor Gil Robles, however, like the Pope, realises the necessity of camouflaging his monarchist sympathies, if his party is to gain the confidence of the nation. He declares himself strongly opposed to Fascism, which has found a pugnacious missionary in the son of the late General Primo de Rivera. The course of events in the next few weeks will largely depend on Gil Robles' ability to prevent the various Right Wing groups from hanging themselves, and perhaps him, with the rope of explicit monarchist sentiments.

Burmese Separation

The Joint Select Committee on India Constitutional Reform has adjourned till January 30th, when it will meet to consider its report. Its last business before the adjournment was the consultation with the Burmese delegates, and the receipt of further memoranda on a separated Burma from Sir Samuel Hoare. Burmese Separation, in the view of the Indian delegates, is a question for Burma herself to decide; though they would probably have done better to welcome Separation, since the Indian Federation will be cumbrous enough, without the addition of a province which has always demanded special treatment. The important Indian minority in Burma may well cling to the Indian connection, for already they find employment in the public services virtually closed to them, and the anti-Indian riots of May 1930 in Rangoon, followed by their sufferings at the hands of Burmans in the 1931 Rebellion, has severely shaken their confidence. But it is difficult to take the Burmese Anti-Separationists very seriously; their election majority was so unreal that they had to accept an agreed resolution in the Legislative Council rejecting Federation save on very special terms, and although they subsequently approved permanent and unconditional Federation they knew that, however much Whitehall may stress the permanence of Federation entry, it would in practice be impossible to refuse a demand for secession after a decent interval. That demand would certainly be made, and Burma's inclusion in an Indian Federation would be followed by an agitation which would paralyse the country for years. English business men in Burma, who were hitherto inclined to accept Separation, are now becoming distrustful of it, realising the danger in a small low-powered administration with a distinct bias against India, the country which provides them with their chief export market.

Housing in Scotland

The Departmental Committee on overcrowding in Scotland has produced a report which favours the establishment of a Scottish National Housing Corporation with wide powers. It will be remembered that the same proposal was rejected for England by the Moyne Committee, or rather relegated to a position of quite minor importance in a plan which contemplated leaving the work of housing mainly in the hands of existing local authorities. The Government is thus confronted with a sharp difference of view. It is true that there is no necessary reason for tackling the Scottish and English housing problems on precisely the same lines; and it might be possible to experiment with a Housing Corporation in Scotland, where the overcrowding is even worse than in England, and then decide whether to apply the same method here. About the desirability of a body of this sort there is everywhere a conflict of opinion, partly because a Housing Corporation can mean in practice so many different things. In Scotland it is possible to conceive of such a body taking the entire job of providing houses out of the hands of the local authorities; but clearly that is impracticable in England, where a Corporation could have, in any event, only concurrent activities and powers. For a national agency designed to supplement and complement the housing work of the local authorities there is much to be said. And in this connection one proposal that is worth careful consideration is that housing should be taken out of the hands of the Ministry of Health, and the Office of Works turned into a real housing department with a corporation of some sort as its instrument for the actual work of building.

Underground Homes

Public opinion is more or less awake to the evils of underground dwellings—but it is less rather than more, and facts and figures based on personal surveys are to be welcomed. We have in our hands an excellent report by two investigators on behalf of the Westminster Housing Association (*Basement Houses*, by A. E. C. Hare, M.A., Ph.D., and N. Hare, B.A., 6*d*.). Their survey covered a large number of basement houses in Pimlico, near Victoria Station, and the picture they give us is all the more telling because there is no deliberate attempt to make our flesh creep. In 650 of these "houses" on which their conclusions are based, 2,019 people are living, a great proportion being young children. There is a considerable amount of overcrowding, and there are in almost all cases the twin devils of the underground dwelling —damp and dark, with the damage to health and happiness that they invariably inflict. The rents of these wretched places vary greatly; the average is 7*s*. a week for one room, 13*s*. for two and 17*s*. for three rooms. In some cases it runs to over £1 for two rooms. Why do the tenants stay in these holes? Few like them; for the vast majority it is the old story of no alternative accommodation that they can afford (and many are practically bound by the nature of their jobs to live in the district). Mr. and Mrs. Hare point out that to move all the tenants from unhealthy basements in Westminster would mean the provision of 2,000 or more new dwellings. The Westminster City Council's "Five Year Plan" proposes to demolish 68 old houses and build 91 new ones!

An Injustice and Its Remedy

It is a strange anomaly in the law of England that whilst a man is bound to support his wife and family during his lifetime, he may make a will which, whatever be the size of his fortune, will leave them penniless. Miss Rathbone in 1931 proposed a remedy for this in a Bill which passed its second reading and was then referred to a Joint Select Committee. The Committee approved the principle but preferred a less drastic plan, and it is on that plan (following the Australian and Canadian model) that the Powers of Disinheritance Bill, which passed its second reading last week, has been based. It does not give a wife or dependent children an absolute right to a definite share of the testator's estate. But it allows them, if left "without adequate provision for proper maintenance, education or advancement in life," to appeal to the High Court (or the County Court in the case of estates below £2,000), and the Court is given complete discretion as to the amount or method of payment of any provision it may order. There has been a good deal of hardship and injustice under the present law, and no one, we imagine, but the most fanatical believer in freedom of bequest will grudge this little Bill getting on to the Statute book.

The Problem of the Coal Mines

The report of the Coal Mines Reorganisation Commission amounts to a confession of failure; but it would be unfair to regard that failure as mainly the fault of the Commissioners. They have, in fact, been given an impossible job. In the first place, the Commission was set up without any power to deal with the problem of royalties, though everyone knew that without unified control over mineral rights there could be no real possibility of carrying schemes of amalgamation through. That was a bad beginning, for which the blame must be laid at the door of the late Labour Government. But, in addition, the Commissioners, though they were armed in theory with compulsory powers, knew very well that they could not rely on the Government to back them up if they attempted seriously to tackle the colliery owners. The Mining Association, well aware of this, has opposed them all along the line, and has even asked for their dismissal. Many of the local associations of owners have refused even information which they could be legally required to give; and only in two or three areas have the majority of owners been prepared to co-operate with the Commissioners at all—and even then only on their own terms. The Commissioners have now with some frankness reported to Parliament the cause of their failure; and it is clearly up to the Government, if it does want any effective measure of reorganisation, to make clear to the owners that it stands behind the Commission and by nationalising mineral ownership to equip it with the powers it needs.

Judicial Reforms

Substantial changes in legal administration are proposed by the Business of Courts Committee. This Committee, presided over by the Master of the Rolls, issued its first report last March, and the two main recommendations it then made—the abolition of Grand Juries and the shortening of the Long Vacation—have already been carried out. The second report, which has just appeared, covers a wider field. Its proposals, if not exactly revolutionary, would do a good deal to simplify judicial procedure and to cheapen litigation. The Divisional Court is to be abolished by merger in the Court of Appeal; and the Court of Appeal would also take over the Court of Criminal Appeal. No more Lords Justices are to be created; puisne judges are to sit to hear appeals. The Probate, Divorce and Admiralty Division also is to be abolished, probate cases going to the Chancery Courts and divorce and admiralty cases to the King's Bench. A slight reform (too slight for one member of the Committee, Lord Justice Wright) is proposed in the circuit system by the abolition of assizes in one or two small towns and the amalgamation of the two Welsh circuits. Finally, the High Court is to have power to remit cases involving £200 or less to the County Courts. We can think of other and more drastic reforms which would benefit the public, if not the legal profession—for example, the abolition of the rigid division between barristers and solicitors. But no one could expect a body like this Committee to be so iconoclastic as that. We welcome the recommendations of Lord Hanworth and his colleagues and hope to see them carried out very soon.

New Truths from the Nazis

Of this years' Christmas messages the most remarkable is certainly that of Dr. Müller, the Reich Primate. "Peace on earth," he tells the world, "does not mean no more war. Peace on earth does not mean the peace of the graveyard." For ourselves, it was with war that we had always associated the graveyard, but it has been left to Nazi Germany to discover that war and peace are really the same thing.

FOR TORGLER'S FREEDOM

GERMAN justice in normal times had an honourable name and we should all like to think that the acquittal of Torgler and the four Bulgarians at Leipzig was a proof that it still retained its independence. The summary of the evidence leading to the acquittal was admirably done and altogether impartial. Some memory of old standards certainly survives in the minds of the judges and we desire to give the Court any credit for moral courage that we honestly may. But the conduct of the trial itself and the second part of the verdict, which consisted in a political diatribe against Communism, apparently designed to divert suspicion that Van der Lubbe's accomplices might have been Nazis, show that the Court was throughout subject to political pressure, while the decision to acquit Torgler as well as the Bulgarians was due, we fear, not so much to judicial independence as to the knowledge that has been brought home to Hitler from influential private sources as well as from the press of the world, that a verdict of guilty would have aroused a storm of indignation in every civilised country.

During the trial itself the Court shielded official witnesses, notably the police officers who had falsified some of the prisoners' answers. It dealt gently with several manifest perjurers, though it singled out one of them for prosecution. It allowed the indictment to be concealed from the public and even from the prisoners. It constantly silenced Dimitrov, though it allowed Göring and other Nazi leaders to make long and irrelevant political harangues in the court. It neglected several openings that might have led us to the real secret of this fire. It ought itself to have supplied by questions from the bench the deficiencies of the perfunctory defending counsel assigned to the prisoners. It rejected a claim, surely proper in the circumstances, and allowed by German law, that foreign counsel should be admitted. It sentenced Van der Lubbe, who was of course guilty at least of arson, to death, though that penalty was prescribed for this crime only after the commission of the offence.

It is evident enough, in retrospect, that the Nazi terrorists pitched on the three Bulgarians by pure chance. Torgler, with the simple chivalry that characterised him throughout, walked into the lion's den, and offered himself as a victim. His conduct was at least *prima facie* proof, even if one could for a moment believe in a Communist plot, that he personally had nothing to do with it. But these Nazi braves are sadists of that lowest type that is incapable of respect for a courageous opponent. As for the Bulgarians, they were selected simply because they were Bulgarians. There did occur a very horrible outrage in the Cathedral of Sofia. It had no noticeable likeness to the crime in the Reichstag building. Still Bulgarians are people who do that kind of thing; these three were handy—ergo, they were guilty. It may be that the Nazis really believed that Communists were responsible for the Cathedral outrage, which looked to anyone who knows the Balkans like a typical piece of Macedonian terrorism. That charge rested on the clumsiest of all the forgeries that came out of the White Russian factory, for it dated an imaginary despatch from the Third International from the Kremlin—nearly half a mile from its office. Such was the origin of the whole case. The evidence collected to sustain it was a tissue of gossip and perjury with a small percentage of tendentious, if possibly honest, mistakes. There has been nothing quite like it since the days of Titus Oates. One is absolved, however, by the verdict from the weariness of analysing it.

What remains of permanent good and evil from this trial? The good is evident enough. A Court of Law, however little one can congratulate it on its conduct of the case, has ventured to give a verdict that must be highly disagreeable to at least one of the Nazi dictators. To realise that one has only to recall Göring's blustering and threats in the witness-box. The blow is the heavier if, as is probable, the verdict is really a concession to foreign opinion. The tactics of those who insisted on throwing the light of day on this case are amply justified. If foreign opinion had shrugged its shoulders and turned its eyes away from the nasty spectacle, it is likely enough that Torgler and possibly even the Bulgarians would have been hanged. The first event has happened that may sow doubts in the minds of simple-minded Germans as to the character of their dictators. They had been entertained to triumphant speeches on the wireless from the prosecuting counsel, in which the whole affair was treated as a case of luminous certainty. They have now received a salutary shock, and they will begin to ask questions. The moral is clear enough—to persist in these tactics, to drag out every fact that can be ascertained about the purgatories called concentration camps, about the continuous persecution of the Jews, and the steady degeneration of German culture and public life. Italian Fascism ranks to-day as something almost respectable, merely because the press grew weary of repeating a familiar tale. To-day the average Englishman forgets that it rests on brutalities as ugly and as pervasive (save for the immunity of Jews) as the Nazi terror. That must not happen again. In the meanwhile it is to the good that some vestige of the old respect for law survives in Germany. It may grow again. It has deep roots. The old Junker and professional caste, with all its exaggerated class-consciousness, had its high sense of honour. Neither in its better nor in its worse mind can it like the Nazi demagogues. It may keep something alive that will help to save Germany.

That is the good that results from this trial. The evil, however, is still alive. It will be a brutal act if the wretched Van der Lubbe is hanged. There can be little doubt, as Dr. Fairfield again points out in our correspondence columns, that he is suffering from *dementia praecox*. Of vastly greater importance, however, was the casual verdict of the Court against the German Communist Party. Neither in Germany nor elsewhere do judges or even the police know much about the mind of revolutionary parties. The Communist record, however, in Germany and elsewhere is as clear as its doctrine. It holds to the Marxist tradition, which despises terrorism as a romantic, individualistic aberration; it believes only in mass action, ranging from strikes, riots and street-fighting up to armed insurrection. It is logical in this and has been in practice consistent; its whole purpose is to rouse the proletariat to class-warfare. In the early Russian struggle it was the populist Social Revolutionaries and their fathers the Narodniki who murdered the Tsar Alexander, Plehve and many others; the Bolshevik effort was (with many strikes) the bloody street-fighting in Moscow. From this tradition there is no evidence in Germany or elsewhere

of any departure. Least of all was there any round about last March, when the Communists (presumably under instructions from Moscow, wholly absorbed in its Five Year Plan and the peril from Japan) were, apart from a half-hearted suggestion of a general strike, as passive and as law-abiding as the Social Democrats.

But the Nazis require this legend of a demoniac Communist conspiracy. They need it for three reasons. First, unless Communists were the group of men who broke the threads in the underground passage that its custodian stretched to test his suspicions, and then used the liquid inflammatory substance that did the real mischief, who were Van der Lubbe's accomplices? No one outside Germany has much hesitation in answering that question. They were the party that profited by the fire—the Nazis. But they dare not let that inference gain ground in Germany. Secondly, they require this legend because their whole movement and their final seizure of power pivoted on the Muscovite danger. At a time when the Communist Party was weaker in revolutionary impulse than it had ever been, they had to create a belief in its power and malignity. And they must still maintain it. They guard Germany against this peril. They have yet a third reason, the most sinister of the three. One day, if and when Warsaw can be squared, they mean to attack Russia, partly to destroy Communism (for this is a sincere fanatical passion), and partly to win earth for German colonists. To justify that, they need this legend. The time to use it may be short; Japan may attack.

That, no less than respect for a brave and honourable man, is the reason why foreign opinion must remember Torgler. He is not yet safe. (The Bulgarians are not yet safe, but it is believed that they will be deported.) Torgler may be tried for treason. But the dictatorship needs neither charge nor verdict to lock him indefinitely in its camps. In these hells it is the bravest and most conspicuous prisoners who have to endure the worst. We have read narratives from the very few who have escaped that bear the stamp of truth. In addition to semi-starvation, filth and exposure, the treatment is a daily flogging: at suitable intervals a rope is provided for suicide. It would be wise on Hitler's part not to use Torgler in this way. Popular imagination cannot visualise 50,000 victims; it can see one. The Duce would tell the Führer that it did not help him to murder Matteotti.

THAT SURPLUS MILK

"A LAND flowing with milk and honey"? That ideal state, at least as far as the milk is concerned, is achieved. And so foolish a thing is capitalism that, though we have a Minister of Agriculture who has energy and ideas and who has talked sense about "the economics of glut," yet he finds in practice that all he can do with his surplus in a Conservative regime is to restrict production. Obviously he should be distributing the new plenty to all who need. We know from recent official statements about the various schemes he has introduced to help agriculture just how large are the food supplies available for distribution, and the shortcomings of the distributive system which lie at the root of the general depression can no longer be disputed. As one marketing board after another discovers in practice the obstacle of under-consumption in the way of its progress, the problem of distribution comes more clearly into view and more nearly within the sphere of national administration. Opinion is slow to move in such new circumstances; the first prosecutions for selling food below a minimum price caused little comment, far-reaching as may be the consequences of the revival of this ancient guild practice. The glut of bacon pigs may be as rare a subject for the breakfast-table as the bacon itself in some households. But the necessary publicity of the schemes can only drive us to a single conclusion, and a Government which takes control of our foodstuffs must itself very shortly find that it has made itself responsible for seeing that they are distributed in a way that will bring the greatest social benefit.

Where is the outlet for these "surplus" supplies? Five groups of persons who might with advantage be supplied either with milk or meals suggest themselves—expectant and nursing mothers, infants, school-children, hospital patients, and necessitous cases guaranteed by a medical officer or relieving officer. In all these cases some partial efforts have been made in this direction, but they are dependent on the enthusiasm of some doctor or philanthropic individual, and the goodwill of some local body. For the present but one of the five classes is likely to be served with meals—the children at school. Only half of our local education authorities provide meals at some schools within their areas, although they have very extensive powers under sections 82 and 84 of the Education Act, 1921. Subject to the recovery of cost of food, where possible, they can provide meals for children attending any public elementary school, both on days when the schools meet and on other days. Recent statistics suggest considerable variations both in the extent to which the Act is applied and the proportion of children who receive their meals free. Local conditions alone cannot explain such differences as the granting of meals free in 93 per cent. of the cases in the non-county boroughs, and only 51 per cent. in London. The same lack of system can be seen in the manner in which certain areas have adopted this system of providing meals; in some they are free or cost only about 2½*d.* a day, while in other similar districts nothing at all is attempted. The total number of children who get these meals is about 320,000, well under 10 per cent. of the total average attendance. The distribution of milk to children is even more haphazard. Some ninety-one local education authorities out of 336 use their powers under the Act, though the eleven o'clock glass of milk is a smaller undertaking than the provision of meals. The method of milk clubs, in which a child can buy one-third of a pint for a penny, has been successfully adopted in various types of schools. This Milk Publicity Council's scheme extends over half the authorities, and some 800,000 children are affected by it.

A statement made recently by the managing director of the Milk Marketing Board gives us a clear notion of the quantity of milk available for such distribution and, taken with the published results of the first months of operation, some indication of the cost. Mr. Foster said that next spring the Board would probably have "40 million gallons a month of surplus liquid milk" to go into manufacture. As the total amount of milk handled by the Board in the first month was 50 million gallons and only 20 per cent. of that went into manufacture, an actual increased production of 30 million gallons is anticipated. This milk is sold to manufacturers at prices varying according to its destination. It is now being sold for butter and cheese making at 3¾*d.* per gallon, and even so manufacturers are demanding further protection against foreign competition. The average price for all that "surplus" milk for all purposes will not exceed 5*d.* per gallon, according to the experience of the Board, and it may well bring less. What an opportunity!

Then as to quality. No responsible body, like the Milk Marketing Board, is going to guarantee the cleanliness and freedom from disease of that ocean of liquid. The most that can be said is that by a process of eliminating the worst farms, and bringing pressure on the others, it should be possible to ensure within a few years a minimum standard of cleanliness about equivalent to the present Grade A. A campaign is being undertaken against tuberculous cows and contagious abortion. In both cases it is essential that the present

economic position of the industry should be improved. The elimination of " T.B." turns largely upon keeping herds young, which itself is bound up with the question of the price of meat, while all improvement is dependent upon encouraging enterprising men with capital to stay in the industry. If the Milk Marketing Board can prevent another slump, the general improvement in quality will follow, but only to the extent suggested above.

The liquid to be distributed will therefore be as dangerous as certain raw vegetables, and will need to be sterilised either by pasteurisation or boiling. It will lose some of its food value, but proportionately not so much as the cabbage loses when dealt with by most English cooks. The lost values can be supplied quite cheaply in other forms. In practice many school-children, and probably some of the other four classes, will not take cold milk, and it is customary to heat it for them. Frequently it is boiled up with cocoa, or given in some other cooked form, just as the carrots in the school meals, though probably better eaten shredded and raw, will invariably be cooked. It is, in fact, possible that in many cases the milk will be given in a manufactured form. In a report on Northumberland schools it appeared that eighty-eight elementary schools had milk clubs. " Grade A " was supplied in two cases, " fresh " milk in six, and in all the rest some proprietary brand of malted milk was given. It is difficult to ascertain whether this choice was made to suit the convenience of the school authorities, or the taste of the children. Similar divergences in the technique of feeding children appear in other areas. Some schools have milk delivered in bottles, others in bulk. Some heat it, some boil it. It is all delightfully unsystematic, and typically English.

The quantity is there, the quality can be improved, safeguards meanwhile can be provided. The difficulties of one department are the opportunities of another. Let the Minister of Health come to the assistance of the Minister of Agriculture and, calling in the Minister of Education, work out a sensible scheme to cover all the cases where a distribution of milk seems advisable on the grounds of national health. The nursing mothers and infants could best be reached through the local maternity and child welfare centre, while for school-children the official machinery already exists. The points to be decided are the quantity of milk, or milk equivalent, which should be made available, the form in which it is to be given, the total expense. If any comprehensive scheme has ever been evolved it lies securely hidden in some dusty pigeon-hole. For heaven's sake let's have it out, and look at it again in the light of 1933, the Milk Marketing Board, President Roosevelt, and recent by-elections.

THIN ICE IN AUSTRIA

Vienna, December 23rd

CHANCELLOR DOLLFUSS has ordered a political truce over Christmas-time in Austria ; he who hopes to seize this moment for analysis and prediction will, however, find the Austrian bandage tight about his eyes. A brave man might venture to assert that the economic position is comparatively clear, while the political situation is infinitely and obscurely complicated. For economically the optimists have been justified, and the signs of improvement in the summer have been substantiated. The internal loan has been over-subscribed, and there are everywhere small signs of industrial improvement, especially in the textile factories. The insecurity of the *Wiener Bank Verein* and of the *Escompte Gesellschaft* are due to the inevitable contraction of the old banking system, and in no way weaken the Austrian schilling. A sterner " means test " does not entirely account for the reduction in the unemployment figures. Food prices are, of course, artificially kept up, and there is a natural lag in agricultural improvement, which is emphasised by the dilatory execution of the agreements with foreign countries for timber export. The hoteliers are probably ruined beyond redemption. Politically it seems true to say that the strength of Dollfuss lies chiefly in the weakness and in the divisions of both his friends and his enemies, and it is part of the situation that those very words are sometimes interchangeable from one day to the next. The Chancellor's *Vaterländische Front* has proved to be nothing but a baroque façade of indifferent workmanship with only a crumbling edifice behind it. Officials are usually compelled to join, but at the same time they remain in their Socialist or Nazi organisations.

The position of the Socialists, though not conspicuously worse than in the summer, is none the less unenviable. They have lost very few of their supporters, and therefore form the most compact political group in the country, but enmity to their principles is the only cement which binds the other factions together. From September to mid-November there was indeed something of a revival of Socialist activity, but when martial law was declared their bravery seemed to fade. They are, of course, pledged to declare a General Strike if the administration of Vienna is taken out of their hands or if the Socialist Trade Unions are dissolved, but it is typical of the Austrian situation that both Dollfuss and the Socialist leaders will seek every pretext for a compromise, since a General Strike would provide a magnificent opportunity for the Nazis. By far the greatest danger to the Socialists is, in fact, the Federal Government's financial offensive against the Red Municipality of Vienna. This seems really shameless. Large sums, beginning with the notorious nineteen million schillings in the summer, are simply seized by the Government, which at the same time orders the Municipality to reduce its taxes on landlords, entertainments, etc. When the City Council, after unhappily deciding to undertake no further building activities, finds itself still with a heavy deficit, all the other parties tell the Socialists this serves them right for their wicked extravagance in the past. The position of the Municipality is appalling. It is compelled to dismiss officials who are its best supporters—or to reduce their salaries to that of Federal officials—while it must desert the builders and the house-needy. It is unthinkable that any movement should survive a bleeding process of this kind. The frequent interference with the Socialist press is mere pin-pricking by comparison ; and to have the responsibility, without the means, for the administration of Vienna is worse than nothing.

It seems that, of late, the commercial negotiations with Czechoslovakia have supplied the Socialists with some sort of reprieve, for Dr. Benes is by way of announcing " Hands off the Socialists if you want anything out of us." But this is only a palliative, and the Social Democratic party must think in terms of emasculation, or of ostensible destruction, in the near future. The Left Wing, many of whom are bitterly indignant with the inaction of their leaders, would choose to fight, to disappear, and to work for a new birth ; the Right Wing would prefer survival even on the Hungarian model, *i.e.*, at the price of losing touch with the workers. The Right, of course, hopes a good deal from the split in the Catholic Christian Social party which became conspicuous in the recent debates in the Lower Austrian provincial diet. The other day, therefore, an unusually conciliatory leading article appeared in the Socialist *Arbeiter Zeitung* insisting that the Catholic peasants stood with the town workers for democracy and against Fascism, and it was interesting to observe a simultaneous leader in the *Reichspost* (Right Wing Christian Social and close to Dollfuss) indicating a sudden *rapprochement* with the reactionary Heimwehr. This organisation has been very noisy of late, but although one of its leaders, Major Fey, replaced the Landbund leader in the office of Vice-Chancellor in September, the Heimwehr has proved to be a flimsy affair, since it is led by bankrupt landowners whom the peasants hate.

Just for the moment there is, then, an alignment of peasants and workers against the employers behind the *Reichspost* and the aristocrats of the Heimwehr. But the enemies of Fascism must not hope too much from this, for the peasants will betray democracy. It is true that the Christian Social Party is more than usually divided between its Fascist and democratic wings, and is staggering a little after the blow inflicted upon

it by the Vatican, which has compelled all priests to withdraw from the political arena. But this will by no means diminish the political influence of the Catholic Church, which will retain, and possibly increase, its hold upon a considerable proportion of the peasants. The rest are fascinated by National Socialist notions and the Nazi legend that Hitlerism is fundamentally democratic; they are either frank Nazis, or they belong to the Landbund and its Corporative Front. This last is another hollow structure, which can serve no ultimate purpose but as a bridge to Nazi Germany with which it is eager to be reconciled. For the peasants are entirely blind to the meaning of the Nazi state, and would, almost innocently, hand over the workers to its mercies.

The Nazi movement in Austria has lost immediate hope. It is numerically undiminished; indeed, it is fairly certain that the Heimwehr nearly brought matters to a real head last week by threatening in so many words to follow its Styrian section into the Nazi ranks. The Dollfuss system of short imprisonments has been rather provocative than discouraging. On the other hand, one does not have the impression that Hitler's heightened prestige in Europe has gained him many new converts here. "We know too much about Prussian militarism to be taken in" is a fairly general attitude.

Between the States around Austria, as between the factions around his person, the opportunist Dollfuss maintains his skilful but precarious balance. Germany's negotiations with France or Poland are nervously watched lest Austria be sold to her. If Germany is still as unpopular here as she was in the summer, there are indications that Italy's influence has lessened. Italy's protégé, the Heimwehr, has weakened as funds from Rome have run out, and Balkan pacts spell humiliation for Italy. Meanwhile one reads constantly that Austria is to be blessed, not with Italian, but with Austrian Fascism. The meaning of this is rather obscure, except that it is to be based upon the Papal Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, that is, the new State is to be essentially Christian.

Beyond this the *hors d'oeuvres* of Austrian Fascism, as served up by Dollfuss, do not suggest a very sharply tasting meal. The elected professional council of the Federal postal employees has been dissolved, and replaced by Government nominees. A Catholic prayer has been made compulsory in the schools. There are probably under 100 people in the "Detention" Camp at Wöllersdorf, and other camps are to be opened. But at present no Socialists have been "detained," and only two or three Communists. There are free debates in the provincial diets. With martial law, the death penalty was to be reintroduced, but the first potential victim has just been reprieved, although he was without doubt guilty of a horrible murder. It should also be recorded that in the early autumn, in a strike in the big Alpine Montan iron works, the Government intervened on behalf of the wage-earners against their Nazi employers.

After endless talk about the immediate introduction of the Corporative State, the matter has now been handed over to the Health Minister Schmitz, a follower of Seipel and one of the ministers who is to be taken most seriously. This, perhaps, really means business, and may be related to the threats of the Heimwehr. But it remains to be seen whether Austrian Fascism means the authoritarian nomination of the representatives of the trades and professions, or their democratic election, to which, as the *Arbeiter Zeitung* indicates, many Socialists could agree. The Left wing Christian Socials form the elective principle in the Corporative State; but Schmitz, who stands to the Right, has already imposed nominated Betriebsräte on Government concerns, and he has nominated members to the Arbeiterkammer, abandoning the practice of election that has been followed since the 1890's. The Bishops' Pastoral Letter, it is worthy of note, is in general on the side of the Left Christian Socials and of Socialists of the extreme Right, though it of course gives no countenance to Left Wing Socialism with its revolutionary tenets. In all the circumstances, it may be tentatively prophesied that Austrian Fascism will achieve some kind of compromise, and will erect a rather ramshackle structure within which many persons will take shelter while continuing to indulge in their favourite complaints. In any international storm this building may well collapse. And when Germany is more completely rearmed, will Italy continue to obstruct her advance?

E. W.

ON RARITIES

As I stood in the window of a Devonshire hotel on the morning of Christmas Eve, a friend said to me excitedly: "What's that bird? It must be something rare. I've never seen it before." Outside a small thrushlike bird was moving in the grass, showing a conspicuous splash of red under its wing. "I think," said I, "it's a redwing." "No, no," declared my friend, "that's not a redwing. It has far too dark a head. I believe—I honestly believe—it's an Arctic blue-throat. Or isn't there a rare bird called a Siberian thrush? How lucky to have seen a new bird!"

Now the bird, I am confident, was a redwing—"only a redwing," as my friend put it afterwards when, drooping with disappointment, he was invited to compare the picture of a redwing with that of an Arctic blue-throat in Thorburn's *British Birds*.

Everyone who has ever been bitten by the craze for looking at wild birds will sympathise with him in his sadness. Even the most amateurish and most inaccurate bird-watcher knows what it is to burn with a fever of desire to see a bird—particularly a rare bird—that he has never seen before. In bird-watching there are always heights beyond the heights that have been conquered. For years the Dartford warbler may seem as remote and final as the peak of Everest; but no sooner has a Dartford warbler been seen than the bird-watcher begins to dream dreams of Pallas's willow-warbler and even of Radde's bush-warbler. No man will ever see all the birds within the limits of a single lifetime. There are at once too many of them and too few of them—too many species and too few members of many of the species. Hence, in watching birds, he undertakes a quest that is endless—a quest that will keep him perpetually happy because perpetually still to be satisfied.

There are times when the bird-watcher is inclined to rail at the niggardliness of Nature. An optimistic writer has told us that the world is so full of a number of things that we should all be as happy as kings. But, in moods of depression we tell ourselves that the world is not nearly full enough of things—that it is too full of sparrows, no doubt, but not full enough of, say, buzzards and ravens. Now, anybody who has ever looked closely at a sparrow knows that it is an extremely beautiful bird. If sparrows were no commoner than goldcrests, we should think highly of them. A sparrow's quarrel on the road would then be one of the desirable spectacles in the animate world, the twitter of sparrows in the ivy would be music in the enthusiast's ear. We must have rarities, however. We know how many people hate the sleep-disturbing song of the nightingale in districts in which nightingales are common. No one who listens to a nightingale for the first time feels any of this resentment. He is ravished: he has made a discovery; he has broken into a new territory of experience. Fortunately, Nature has found a means of preventing most of the birds from becoming too common. The custom of migration makes half the birds novelties to wonder at every Spring. How exquisitely the notes of the first chiff-chaff strike the ear in April! Imagine a world, however, in which chiff-chaffs were as plentiful as sparrows, and how little we should esteem the iteration of that absurd noise! By confining the song of many resident birds to certain months of the year, again—by dividing the year into mute months and singing months—Nature has protected us from sameness and monotony. The blackbird and the thrush delight us all the more

because their songs after their periods of silence are novelties to the ear. It is true that the songs of the robin and the wren may be heard in any month of the year and are none the less delightful on that account. But may not our pleasure in their songs sometimes be partly due to the fact that they sing in seasons in which song itself is a rarity?

There are, of course, two great pleasures in the observation of Nature—the pleasure of familiarity and the pleasure in rarity. Often we find them combined, as when we catch our first sight of the returning swallow. It is difficult to believe that the man who sees a swallow for the first time experiences a deeper pleasure than the man who for the fiftieth year in succession sees a swallow newly returned from Africa. The pleasures of familiarity touched with strangeness are probably the greatest pleasures of all.

At the same time, the craving for novelty is insuppressible. We long to set out for the unknown, whether among birds or flowers or places. To see the stained-glass in York Cathedral is a fine experience: not to have seen it and to desire to see it is also an experience not to be despised. Stevenson, perhaps, would have shown himself a better philosopher if he had written that the world is so full of a number of things which we have not yet seen that we should all be royally happy. Lack of means and lack of space will always prevent most of us from seeing one ten-thousandth part of the wonders of the world. The flowers of Thibet will remain to the end a rarity to me, as no doubt, the dandelion and the buttercup are to the Thibetans. The birds of Java will still be undiscovered country, and the Taj Mahal will, so far as I am concerned, remain for ever a potential novelty as a spectacle.

Fortunately, however, a certain amount of novelties come to our door. The travelling show brings the bearded lady to the country fair, and youths and maidens who would care little for bearded ladies if they were as common as bearded men pay twopence to see so rare a sight. An enormous giant, again, or a tiny dwarf is exceptional enough to be an afternoon's wonder. If the world were mainly populated by giants or dwarfs, crowds of people would pay twopence a head for the pleasure of looking at you or me. As it is, we are hopelessly ordinary, and, if we stood in a booth all day, the few who came to see us would demand their money back in disgust.

It is this disgust with the ordinary that accounts at least in part for the invention of so many strange monsters by the popular fancy. Not content with the lion, the tiger and the elephant, we have created the unicorn, the gryphon and the mermaid as additions to the understocked menagerie of the earth. In our passion for rarity we improve upon nature. Nearly all the fairy tales exceed the bounds of common life, because common life is not good enough for us.

We have had an excellent example lately of this passion for the strange in the widespread excitement over the Loch Ness monster. Is there, we wonder, an enormous water-beast unknown to the zoologists wandering among the waters of a Scottish lake? Is the sea-serpent, after all, to break out of the world of fiction into the world of fact? The evidence of those who profess to have seen the Loch Ness monster would make it difficult for him to prove an alibi in a court of law. Yet the story of the great worm in the lake is such a very old story, and so very ill substantiated in the past, that one remains sceptical. I, myself, I may say, have an open mind about the monster—not a wide-open mind, but a mind with just the tiniest chink left open so that he can push his way in if he turns out to be real. On the whole, however, knowing how easily deceived is the human eye—so that, for example, a man can mistake a redwing for an Arctic blue-throat—I distrust even the evidence of the human eye. On such a matter, I might trust my own eye, but not other people's eyes. I know how easy it is to mistake a snag of tree in the current of a river for an otter or a water-rat. A writer to the *Times* tells how some years ago he saw an obvious sea-serpent in a lake only to discover that it was three otters following each other in Indian file. I do not wish to believe in the sea-serpent if it is to lead to disillusionment of this kind. Yet the sea-serpent clearly exercises a strong fascination on the human imagination. He has been the pet of the story-teller for centuries. Nearly all the other imaginary monsters have passed out of common belief. The dragon and the unicorn are now no more than figures of speech. If any man told us that he had seen a dragon or a unicorn, we should laugh at him as a liar. Perhaps our milder attitude to the man who claims to have seen a sea-serpent is due to our secret wish to keep at least one of the old monsters in the world of possibilities. How interesting a distant lake has become to us because of the rumour that it is inhabited by such a rarity! The world would certainly be a livelier place for his presence. I fear, however—I fear that, just as the Arctic blue-throat turned out to be only a redwing, so the monster of Loch Ness will turn out to be only something that no Londoner would go as far as Southend to see.

Y. Y.

BRIDGE PARTIES

THERE is no mistaking the singularly vivifying wave of national consciousness that is sweeping over India. This is manifesting itself in numerous, untold, and, it must be admitted, occasionally disconcerting ways. Thus, thirty years ago, it is doubtful whether caste Hindus would have acknowledged that multitude of sixty millions known as the "Untouchables" or the "Depressed Classes" as being Hindus at all. To-day, the Harijan movement is widespread, the caste Hindu conscience acknowledges the "Harijan" or "Man of God," as the Untouchable has been renamed, as a special responsibility of its own, and Gandhi has been prepared to fast unto death to have them included in the Hindu comity and precluded from voting in separate electorates like any other considerable body of non-Hindus. True, in all probability, this was partly an astute move on the part of the caste Hindus, among whom Gandhi must be included, in the Hindu *v.* Mohammedan political game, so as to ensure the swelling of the numbers of the caste Hindus likely to be returned to the reformed legislatures of the future. For, as one distinguished writer puts it, "It is awkward to be reminded by rival Mohammedan politicians that more than one-third of the supposed total Hindu population is not accepted by Hindus as part of themselves." There is undeniably another side to the Harijan movement, however, and quite apart from the Hindu *v.* Mohammedan aspect it has quickened that sense of "belonging," of "hanging together" in the face of all comers, particularly against the encroachments of the foreigner, which is too often what men understand by "Nationalism." This is a feature now found not only among Harijan workers, but among people of all classes.

Two anecdotes illustrate very clearly the change that has taken place. The writer recently entered a shop in search of that quinine which no household in India is long without. Being fresh to the country and still unable to distinguish between one coin and another without the inscription, the writer asked to be enlightened as to the value of some of the change offered from which the inscriptions had been obliterated. This the assistant obligingly did, with the remark, "I expect that you find it as difficult to distinguish between these coins as we do between the two-shilling piece and the half-crown when *we* go home." This year the writer attended a certain charitable function with some friends, and though strangers to most of those present, they found themselves, to their amazement, called upon to sit on the platform during the opening speeches. Though they demurred to this, on the ground that they had no official connection with the function or with the society in whose aid it was being held, the speaker, a former High Court judge, insisted, with a "No, that does not matter. There are so few foreigners who take an interest in our Indian charities that we feel that we must honour those who do." A short two years separates these incidents. We have indeed travelled far from the little Indian chemist's assistant, a lad who had in all probability never been to Europe,

yet felt England was "Home" to the judge to whom an Englishman was a foreigner.

Concurrent with, and perhaps contributory to, this growth of the nationalistic spirit is the decline of the prestige of the West. Neither is it the politically minded alone who look to Japan for an example and a lead. Western-educated Hindus compare the standing and standard of living of the European at home with that which the young mercantile assistant assumes when in India, and with that of the type of Indian whom he meets socially, and who is generally immeasurably his social superior, judged by Indian standards. The comparison drawn is not generally in favour of the European. These same Western-educated Indians, who, it should be remembered, are mostly of high castes, retort with a *Tu quoque* to our protestations of horror at the evils of the caste system. They say that it must be deliberate self-deception or hypocrisy that closes our eyes to the fact that they exist with unabated if not equal strength at home, and point out that a duke will not dine with a dustman; nor marry his daughter nor give him his own daughter in marriage. He will not permit his sons to attend the same schools, and will prevent, as far as in him lies, the dustman's sons from receiving the same education, on the ground that anything but a severely practical and extremely elementary education unfits them for their station in life. The Indian theory is much the same, but more logically applied.

These and other causes have combined to produce a closing-in of the ranks, as it were. Men who know the India of the old days and talk of the ease with which an Indian opens his heart will hardly believe that so radical a change can have taken place in such a short period. It is undoubtedly the case, however, that the newcomer to India finds it harder to make Indian friends than did his predecessor. It is almost incredible, but it is true, that it is possible, with the best will in the world to be friendly, to live for more than two years in a city of over a million Indian inhabitants without getting to know any Indian well enough to offer or be offered hospitality in the home. Outside the home, yes. In a hotel or restaurant, on the race-course, in a club meeting room—anywhere neutral. Men who had been bosom pals at the University become trusted associates in business, very friendly, confidential even, but confine intercourse to the office. At a recent Indian society wedding there were over a thousand guests, but not one European. It was intimated to European friends that the ceremonies were to be purely in accordance with Hindu customs, and that their presence would be embarrassing to both Hindus and Europeans alike. The incident is symptomatic of the growing exclusiveness of Indian society. Hitherto that exclusiveness has been all on the side of the Europeans. Now the Indian is taking a leaf out of our book. He is saying in effect: "You do not want us; but you are not such catches as we once thought you, so why should we run after you? We can easily do without you." Hence, before long, those "Bridge Parties"—Mr. E. M. Forster's apt name for those functions held in order to bridge the gulf between East and West—which were formerly given on the initiative of the European community will be given on that of the Indian, for bridged the gulf must be, from whichever end the start is made.

With this exclusiveness goes its inevitable concomitant, suspicion. One is reminded of the remark attributed to a resident of a Welsh mining village: "Here's a foreigner; let's heave a lump of coal at him." This suspicion manifests itself in different quarters in unexpected ways. Here again examples will best illustrate the shades of feeling. An Indian acquaintance, on being asked whether she were a member of the local Council of Women, an international organisation whose objects are the study and improvement of the condition of women and children, responded with a flood of bitterness that threatened to overwhelm the innocent inquirer. The gist of it was that she would never dream of belonging to an association domineered over by Europeans, however benevolent their intentions. And how shall we account for the remark made by a charming, cultured, travelled Indian, an internationally minded man, when invited to call at the writer's residence at a hotel: "If you would excuse me, I would rather meet you elsewhere. We Indians feel rather chary of setting foot in a European hotel. You have taught even the hotel servants, who are of our own race, to look down on us, and it is too humiliating an experience to march down a hotel corridor under their scornful eyes." One may think these suspicions unjustified and the behaviour consequent upon them mistaken, but when one remembers the behaviour of Europeans of the type who will protest with tears in their eyes how much they love India, yet will answer, when teased about having overbid for an article at an auction of second-hand goods, "Well, I wasn't going to let any damned native have a thing I was wanting," one wonders whether having sown the wind we are not now reaping the whirlwind.

BE IT RESOLVED

So the year goes out with an ugly tale
  Of pact and pledge forsaken,
Of a Conference met without avail,
  And a League decried and shaken;
And our only safety is that which comes
  From guns of longer range,
And it isn't the moment to clear the slums
  Or the barriers to exchange.
Yet Hitler's homage to peace was paid
  In echoing words and rousing,
And Runciman prated of helping trade,
  And Hilton Young of housing;
And the French declare they would fain disarm,
  And the Fascists denounce intrigue,
And Simon has promised to find a charm
  For strengthening the League.
Then, if ever our statesmen should turn aside
  From their "rows and revolutions"
To humble their hearts and physic their pride
  With New Year resolutions,
We will pardon their follies and quit their score
  When they're pledged upon bended knee
To *doing* the things in thirty-four
  That they *talked of* in thirty-three.

MACFLECKNOE

Correspondence

VAN DER LUBBE

SIR,—The observations on the mental condition of Van der Lubbe which you were good enough to print in your issue of October 28th have brought me many comments and requests for a further note on the development of the trial. From the psychiatric point of view the diagnosis of schizophrenia (as my expert friends agree) seems more definite than ever. The fact that the three official medical witnesses testified to the contrary is most charitably explained by the supposition that all the competent mental specialists in Germany were Jews and for obvious reasons were not available.

In confirmation of the diagnosis one may note that, *inter alia*, the published photographs of the prisoner might have been torn from a text-book on "dementia praecox"; that he has maintained his collapsed attitude with "head sunk almost to his knees" for three months; that at times the stupor has been so profound as to resemble sleep; that he has varied his apathy by gusts of silent laughter or whimpering, unprovoked by any relevant incident." The "lucid intervals," of which much have been made, provide still further evidence on careful study. Van der Lubbe's outburst on November 23rd showed a good knowledge of passing events and a fairly clear recollecion of recent incidents, but this is commonly the case with schizophrenia when the mists break and they are able to communicate their thoughts. A comparison of newspaper reports suggests that the necessity for condensing cables and the exigencies of translation through two languages have given a misleading impression of the coherence

of the prisoner's statements. Very contradictory and irrelevant answers had to be explained away by the President or by counsel, and characteristic psychotic remarks such as references to "symbolism," to voices in his body, to "guilt questions" have been glossed over. The picture is unmistakable. It is, I think, quite important to note also that Dimitrov and Torgler, two very shrewd witnesses with a good opportunity of judging, have openly expressed the view that their companion in misfortune is a lunatic.

A late medical superintendent of Broadmoor told me once that the majority of his patients suffered from this form of insanity, the reason being that schizophrenics keep their thoughts so much to themselves that their evil intentions emerge as sudden impulses and cannot be thwarted in time. They very rarely combine to commit crime as they are not interested in other people's ideas, and are too erratic to be trusted as allies. Occasionally, however, they can be used as dupes by a person who does not expect co-operation but knows how to handle them and to provide opportunity for the impulse when it occurs. Is it not possible that this is the solution of the mystery of the Reichstag burning and of Van der Lubbe's silence about his alleged accomplices?

It is possible that the shock of the trial may yet jerk the prisoner back to sanity, as has been the case with some English schizophrenic murderers. In any case he seems beyond human aid. Will my fellow Catholic readers remember to intercede for the poor lad, alive or dead, by all the means at their disposal?

LETITIA FAIRFIELD

INSULIN

SIR,—Replying to questions in the House of Commons about the new duty of 33 per cent. on imported insulin, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade, Dr. Burgin, said:

> No statistics of imports or of the world price of insulin were available, but he was informed that for some time the retail price from one maker in this country had been 1*s.* 8*d.* per 100 units, and 2*s.* from other makers. An undertaking had been given on behalf of British makers that their price would not be raised as the result of the new duty. (Cheers). The Minister of Health had the price of insulin very much in mind and proposed to watch it closely.

Most of your readers will know that insulin is indispensable to the well-being and often to the life of diabetics. It must be taken, at all cost, every day of a diabetic's life, and it is used by at least 100,000 people in this country.

May I add a few facts—which apparently Dr. Burgin was unable or unwilling to supply?

In 1929, insulin in England cost 2*s.* 8*d.* per 100 units. At that time I was able to buy it in Denmark at 3.50 kroner per 400 units, *i.e.*, 11½*d.* per 100, or 9½*d.* at the present rate of exchange. Later on in 1929 Danish insulin was put on the English market at 1*s.* 6*d.* per 100 units retail, and the price of the British product fell immediately to 2*s.*, while Boots introduced a second-grade product at 1*s.* 8*d.* Last year the price of Danish insulin fell to 1*s.* 5*d.* and would have fallen farther, but for the 10 per cent. *ad valorem* duty. I believe another reduction would have been made this winter had not the new tax been imposed to maintain the price and market in the interests of three or four manufacturing firms, and against the interests of 100,000 diabetic sufferers.

An average daily dose of insulin is 50 units, *i.e.*, £18 a year with best English insulin, or £12 (including Government tax) with imported insulin of equal quality. The difference between the two figures represents the annual blood money which the diabetic using British insulin pays to the manufacturers or their shareholders. Those few who have discovered the far better value they get from imported insulin are paying a tax on their health. There are thousands who cannot afford sufficient insulin to maintain full health.

Has Dr. Burgin forgotten, or did he never know, that the representative of British Drug Houses, Ltd., stated before the Tribunal considering the new tax that his firm with Burroughs and Wellcome shared 80 to 90 per cent. of the home market? Is it not obvious that the tax has been imposed to maintain that stranglehold on the market which otherwise our manufacturers would lose in face of the falling price of imported insulin? The price will not be raised (cheers), but will it be reduced?

Hungry diabetics will read with alarm the last sentence of Dr. Burgin's statement. Had the price of insulin been left to itself in a free market it would have been little more than half what it is now, and rich and poor could have enjoyed in full measure the almost unbelievable blessings of one of the greatest discoveries of medical science. Cannot diabetics realise that with every unit of British insulin they buy they are helping to maintain its present iniquitous price, and to starve their fellow-sufferers? I do not believe that it is the wish of the majority in this country that so many unfortunates should be allowed to be exploited for commercial gain.

Let me say that I have no financial interest, except as a consumer, in any firm manufacturing insulin. I enclose my card, and ask your leave to sign myself A FORTUNATE DIABETIC

THE TRAFFIC IN ARMS

SIR,—It is widely recognised that the uncontrolled manufacture of, and trade in, munitions of war for private profit is an important factor in increasing the danger of war, and there is a growing protest against its continuance. There has not, however, so far as I have been able to observe, been any adequate study of the difficulties in ending or controlling the traffic, or of the best means of surmounting them. The difficulties are obviously great, one being that the firms which make munitions of war also make useful and harmless goods.

May I therefore ask for consideration of my own suggestions? They are:

(1) That all firms manufacturing guns, armour-plate, explosives, warships, poison gases, bombing machines, or other munitions of war should be required to accept on their directorates two or more Government representatives, with all the powers of other directors.

(2) That the duties of the Government representatives shall include (*a*) the prevention of sales to foreign Powers of means of offence if they are liable, when so sold, to be used against our own people; (*b*) all propaganda by the firm for increased "defence" expenditure; (*c*) all incitement by the firm of apprehensions among foreign nations of danger from one another; and (*d*) any contravention or evasion of the financial regulations specified below.

(3) That all manufacture for war purposes shall be costed separately from the other manufacture carried on by the firm, and the costs and proceeds put into a separate account; and that the net profits accruing from that side of the firm's activities shall be paid over to the Treasury, and used for the reduction of the National Debt.

(4) That the Government representatives shall make their reports to the Prime Minister and the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. One at least of those assigned to any particular firm shall be a Civil Servant, but no one shall be drawn from the Navy, Army and Air Departments. GILBERT SLATER

4 Park Crescent, Oxford.

ADVERTISE PEACE!

SIR,—Being distressed by the present neglect of the cruder forms of Pacifist propaganda, I feel impelled to make this appeal to your readers. One way to combat the influence of militarist newspapers is the use of posters. The League of Nations Union has printed some effective ones, dealing with such themes as the dangers of a race in armaments. These can be easily obtained. If, however, these are not to the taste, it is a simple and not very expensive procedure to get posters printed privately. The trouble will not deter a genuine Pacifist.

In this locality we have recently secured the exhibition of nine large posters at strategic points on the roads. I write this in the hope of persuading other districts to do likewise. We need to remove our intellectualist kid-gloves, and justify the reproach of "militancy!" RUFUS

Lyndhurst, Scotland Road,
Buckhurst Hill.

"BACK TO ANARCHY"

SIR,—In your article of December 16th you object to the idea of an understanding between the Great Powers as a sort of Holy Alliance. Yet you appear to advocate another sort of Holy Alliance between the so-called Democratic States, as the only way to maintain peace. But which are these States? Great Britain is still a Democratic country, but within the British Empire there is (still) the Irish Free State which is an autocracy, and India which is certainly not a Democracy, fortunately for its inhabitants. France is more or less a Democracy; but what about her vassals, without which she will not enter into any international understanding? It requires a bold effort of the imagination to regard Jugoslavia as a Democracy, or even Rumania. Consequently the future League would have to dispense with France, and if it were to be limited to pure Democracies, whose numbers tend to diminish year by

year, it would comprise little more than the British Empire, minus India and the Free State, the Scandinavian countries, Holland and Switzerland. But would these nations, singly or collectively, be prepared to undertake real obligations to enforce their will on all outsiders?

The essential point appears to me to be that the Great Powers, regardless of their respective internal policies, who are really responsible and capable of enforcing peace, should come to an understanding for its maintenance both within and without the League. Even if the agreement were outside the League, it would not follow that the Geneva organ could not continue to go on doing other useful work. We must not forget that in the past thirteen years a great deal of the most important diplomatic activity has been conducted outside the League, and that even within it there have been frequent disputes between the Great Powers, each of which tried to secure the support of groups of smaller ones for its own policies. It was this fact which made the working of the League to a large extent unsatisfactory and often fruitless. If the Great Powers were to arrive at an understanding such as I have suggested, the more irresponsible small Powers (for there are small Powers *and* small Powers) would no longer constitute a danger to peace. LUIGI VILLARI

The Athenaeum, Pall Mall, S.W.1.

POLITICS AT THE UNIVERSITIES

SIR,—To a Socialist of fifty years' standing, now observing the grandchildren of his own generation at our Universities, the letter of Mr. Julian Bell, in your issue of December 23rd (and especially its cardinal sentence) is of extreme and encouraging interest. Adequate intelligence and sensibility for appreciating the Socialist critique appear to endow the products of our public school education only at cyclical intervals. The adequately intelligent University men who helped to found the Fabian Society did not number half a dozen. They had, however, sufficient sensibility to appreciate that the critique was of outstanding importance, that something had to be done about it, and that they had to try their hand at doing it—which they did. This generation of their sons and daughters, represented at Cambridge by such names as Keeling, Dalton, Brooke and Keynes, produced a further and more abundant recruitment of men and women who prophesied similarly because they were intelligent and clear-sighted enough to know. The present generation of undergraduates—their children and our grandchildren—are now, Mr. Bell assures us, discovering that we are to-day actually *in* the period, foreseen by their Socialist parents and grandparents, of "the breakdown of the whole capitalist system, and facing a period of war and revolution." The phrase "King and Country" is detected by University Unions to be a variant of hocus-pocus. So it really does appear that our Universities may now be producing a third swarm of Leonids, who under pressure of the actual collapse of the sky on their own heads may exhibit some stronger and more effectual reactions of intelligence and sensibility than have the University products of the two intervening periods, during which I, for one, have continually wondered what undergraduates could be thinking about and feeling. Hitlerism in Germany appears to be in some degree a manifestation due to a similar painful discovery about capitalism on the part of its middle-class progeny. It is to be hoped that our Universities still stand sufficiently by the faculty of intelligence to preserve us at least from such a coster-monger's revolution as Nazi Socialism. PRIMITIVE FABIAN

A REVOLUTION IGNORED

SIR,—Is it a revolution or just a swindle? The writer of the article under the above title in your issue of December 16th puts the case for advertised brands with considerable astuteness and with a blameless objectivity that disarms criticism, but any informed person knows perfectly well that he is hiding a good deal that is not quite so pleasant. A "packeteria" world is all right. Nothing could be better than to have our shops filled with goods of guaranteed value, all neatly packeted and branded and advertised and ready for sale. The particular point of all the preliminary packeting, branding and advertising being of course to ensure that the public gets good value when it buys. Unfortunately, that is just the point where your Publicity Agent steps off. The sort of thing that attracts him as an advertising proposition is the "little something" the value of which is only known to its manufacturer and his maker. So long as an appeal about "good health" or "good looks" or "labour saving" can be hitched on to it, all is well.

No really conscientious Publicity Agent would think of recommending a manufacturer to spend money advertising a line which did not carry an easily worked appeal and a large margin of profit. As a result, Meat Extracts, Health Food Drinks, Fruit Jellies, Custard Powders, Patent Cleaners and Polishes, and Liver Salts get plenty of publicity. Fresh Vegetables, Bread, Meat, Milk, Fish, Butter, Bacon, Eggs and Cheese get little or none. English Canned Fruits are a conspicuous example of an industry which deserves but cannot afford publicity. What advertisers of brands really delight in though is a publicity fight between two manufacturers. The "Furor Teutonicus" is mild in comparison with the unbridled wrath of a manufacturer when his own pet profit-making packet is threatened by a rival. Then the sparks fly, and the fun becomes fast and furious and very profitable to the Advertising World in general.

Personally, I do not dislike Publicity Agents. I like them, partly because they are stimulating a rising standard of living, partly because of the beauty and wit they manage to squeeze into modern advertising, and also because they are sometimes able to help me or someone else to make a net profit. But I resolutely refuse to accept them as the pure-hearted apostles a public-spirited revolution. Not in the grocery trade, anyway. GROCER

THE HOUSING SCANDAL

SIR,—Your comment upon the "Housing Scandal" in your issue of December 16th concluded with the words: "the incompetence and cynicism of Sir Hilton Young *and his department*."

I have underlined the last three words. Do you wish to suggest to the public that the permanent officials of the Ministry of Health are incompetent and cynical? Hard words about politicians are slight matters, but such a bitter attack upon these particular civil servants seems to need the support of some evidence available to the public.

My own contacts with officials over the last ten years have prepared me to be surprised at the strong language you have felt it necessary to use.

Is this "incompetence and cynicism" a matter of recent growth, or has it been obvious to you over a period of years?

Pylewell House, JOHN BUYERS
Hythe, Southampton.

[Of course we do not suggest that the individual permanent officials of the Ministry of Health are incompetent and cynical persons. We were speaking of the incompetence of the Ministry as a housing department, and the charge of cynicism applied primarily to the Minister himself. The occasion of our comment was a debate in the Lords, in the course of which the Bishop of Winchester asked how many houses at a low rental were required, and how many of such houses the Ministry estimated would be provided by local authorities and by private enterprise. The answer was that no figures could be given. Considering the urgency of the problem and the importance of these particular aspects of it, does not that show a deplorable feebleness in investigating and planning and acting? Could the official spokesman with a competent national housing department have given such an answer?—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

TRAFFIC PROBLEMS IN BEDFORD SQUARE

SIR,—Mr. Lanchester in his letter in your last issue raises a point which in the interests of the public should be further stressed. He wisely criticises the whole system of terminus traffic, whether for tram or trolley bus, and emphasises the necessity for lateral connection. In order to arrive at soundly based decisions for so wide a scheme, preliminary surveys are necessary of at least as complete a nature as those prepared on the continent for the solution of similar problems. So far in this country the authorities have not felt justified in incurring the very heavy expense entailed in such preparatory work. Now, however, the public, who bear the loss of time and money and suffer the irritation resulting from a bad traffic system, should insist on footing the bill for the immediate preparation of a comprehensive, not piecemeal, traffic plan for the London Regional Area. The proposals for the Bedford Square trolley bus terminus are by no means well founded, and will, if eventually carried out, be regretted by all.

The problem is a scientific one in which research plays an important part. In most other branches of commercial activity expensive staffs of specialists are maintained, either at public or private expense. When dealing with that greatest of all machines, a modern town, conditions of inefficiency are tolerated by business

men, who would in their offices and workshops scrap without hesitation obsolete machinery the moment they receive a confirming report from their research experts. It is to be hoped that before very long the London Passenger Transport Board will show that they are going to take such an attitude and produce a scheme in conjunction with the authorities and experts which shall give to Londoners a town completely replanned to meet not the present requirements, but those of the years to come. Such vision will be good commercial economy, which should appeal to every business man in the London area. E. A. A. ROWSE

The Architectural Association,
34, 35 and 36 Bedford Square, W.C.1

VERSE-DREAMING

SIR,—I was much interested by "Critic's" remarks about verse-dreaming, because I had just had a letter from my mother, an old lady of eighty-four, sending me the following Limerick she had made up in her sleep:

There lay a young man on some cliffs
Who was terribly bored by some "Ifs."
"Shall I get a reward
If I worship the Lord?"
So thought the young man on the cliffs.

I only remember once dreaming in verse myself—a very commonplace couplet which I have now forgotten, and I have never heard of any remarkable poetry—or music—being composed in sleep, unless it is true of Kubla Khan.

I have several times found myself in a dream preparing to read in public from a book or paper, but the actual time for reading has never somehow arrived. I often wonder whether I should have found myself able to read and, if so, whether I should have remembered anything of what I had read on waking.

In my experience dream action takes place without words. At least I cannot remember any conversation ever coming into a dream. Perhaps that is why the action can pass so quickly.

Headington Hill, Oxford. F. E. MAITLAND

COMMUNIST CENSORSHIP

SIR,—A modern instance of censorship may be of interest.

I have published, through Messrs. Hamish Hamilton, a small book on Marx which has been very kindly treated by the critics. But it suggests that Marx or Engels may conceivably have been mistaken on certain points, and it contains no praises of the Communist Party. As a result the "Workers' Bookshop" in 16 King Street, which supplies a certain number of Labour organisations, has placed a ban upon it. "Postgate shall hear more of this!" was the manager's reply to the publisher's traveller. Furthermore, the *Daily Worker*, owned by the same people, declined to allow an advertisement of books published by the National Council of Labour Colleges to appear until a Committee had gone through all the books mentioned to see whether they contained heresies. This is not an invention, I assure you: the correspondence can be read in this month's *Plebs*.

There is a persistent, and I believe not unfounded, rumour that almost the sole remaining bookshop in London which is independent and deals in advanced publications is to be bought up by a wealthy supporter of the Communist Party in order to enforce the same censorship.

In these circumstances, I suggest that it is perhaps time for all those who care for freedom of Socialist thought to transfer their patronage to bookshops which make no discrimination. In particular, should not the Labour Party now take the lead in setting up a large book service? R. W. POSTGATE

4 Elm Close, N.W.4.

O.K.

SIR,—With reference to the derivation of the expression "O.K.," I remember reading somewhere or other that it originated with the importation of pepper from the West Indies.

The best pepper came from Aux Cayes, therefore if it was Aux Cayes it was all right. This was corrupted into "O.K.," and then used generally for anything good.

Oxton, Birkenhead. WM. HENDERSON

Critic will resume the London Diary next week and will welcome a large bunch of carrots from readers.—ED. N. S. & N.

Miscellany

CHRISTMAS PLAYS

THE brothers Melville are old hands at a pantomime. They know what the ingredients ought to be, and how they ought to be mixed: astonishment, fun, and a glorious defiance of both expense and probability. *The Queen of Hearts* at the Lyceum Theatre is a feast—that sort of feast. A verse from an Irish song, popular in the music halls of the 'nineties, would serve as a motto to this bill of fare:

There was ham and lamb,
And beer by the bucket and imported Cham,
And you never saw such a divil of a cram,
When we all sat down to dine.

The brothers Melville know their business: how to jumble up fairy-land and realities together; when to follow a story and when to ignore it. They have been blessed by their "stars": Mr. George Jackley as the Knave, with his fantastic blunders and schemes, and the Queen of Hearts, who plays the part of a charmer of the 'nineties. The Knave steals the tarts—and—hey, presto!—finds himself in a police station. Excellent too were the Royal Sleuth Hounds, "Charlie Stripe" and "Jimmy Gold." The King of Hearts (Mr. Dick Henderson) is delightfully thick, squat and card-like. Indeed, the two "Dicks" are in the best pantomime tradition. "Dick" the Queen combines the grotesque haughtiness of the camel with the manners of a "grande dame"—as she should.

The ending of the first part of the pantomime is gorgeous—the Land of Flames and the tableaux "Love's Garden." In the Grand Fairy Ballet the principal dancers were excellent and the contortionist dancer (to me) excruciatingly so.

The Castle of Cards was startlingly gay; its collapse amazingly impressive. The scene outside the royal lodgings, after the Card Castle had been destroyed by the Witch, was received with shouts of joy. The Knave having turned garage-keeper entertains the King's sleuth-hounds by juggling a trick or two with eggs and plates. Then there followed a smashing and spilling, a tumbling and a messing on the Gargantuan scale which releases joy in the destructive heart of man. We had tasted splendour; now we enjoyed the delight of destruction; and the success of thus thumping boldly on those primitive chords in our breasts was proved by the Knave's triumph in making the whole audience sing in an ecstasy of self-oblivion an extremely foolish song about going up, up, up and down, down, down, a mountain! They could not have enough of it. They had turned into children and wanted it "again and again."

What did the story matter! The entertainment had brought that brief release from reflection, from cause and effect, from looking before and after, from obligations, from self-consciousness that it is the glory of the pantomime to bestow.

I went to another kind of children's play at the Westminster Theatre, which had a different object—*Alice and Thomas and Jane*. (The title will remind you of that delightful children's book by Enid Bagnold, published by Heinemann.) The child-characters are the same as in that story, and part of the play is laid at Dieppe; but "the adventures" is different. Miss Vera Beringer has woven into the original a spy-hunting theme, and the theft by a French onion-seller of Mr. Budd's airplane invention. The children after tribulations and difficulties, and with the help of a most amiable bear-leader and his bear, recover their father's drawings. Thus the playlet is a variation on the "Jack the Giant Killer" theme. It is child-fantasy. The grown-up can only look on and *hope* that this mixture of the matter of fact and impossible is just right, and to youthful taste. The adult cannot judge, but from the delight of a hundred or so children on the afternoon I went I infer that the mixture was judicious. On the other hand, there were excellent strokes of child-character in it, which could *only* be enjoyed by grown-ups. It is like *Peter Pan*, a risky mixture of sentiment about childhood and child-

hood's fantasy. But it is not *unexpected* enough, though the suspense is well managed—especially while we are kept wondering how on earth the three children are going to get a free passage to Dieppe.

Hansel and Gretel is, of course, a work on altogether another level. It is a work of art. One of the most charming of light operas. It requires much more imaginative handling than it meets with at the Cambridge Theatre. Here is something which must be respected, and, failing the most circumspect elaboration, simplicity ought to have been the guiding principle of the production. It was not. The producers ought to have trusted to the music to provide the magic. The orchestra consisted of members of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and played with spirit; but the choruses of witches, goblins, angels and gingerbread girls were never more than competent. Certainly no more can be said for the acting of Hansel or the witch. Hansel did not succeed in being a simple peasant boy, he became a "Simple Simon." Why should he turn in his toes? The first scene in the woodman's cottage, however, was delightful and in the true fairy-story key. The peep at the wood outside suggested wild-strawberries, wolves and bears. The drama of this scene is delightful to children as well as adults: the suggestion of hunger, the joy of a basket of provisions, the sense of children who have lost their way in a forest, and have not returned though darkness is falling. But the Forest Scene was devoid of that suggestiveness; in spite of the designer's efforts to achieve the eerie one might have been in a Surrey wood. The elaboration of the production was unfortunate. By-the-by, in the part of Hansel, a woman's voice is more suitable. Miss Victoria Hopper was an attractive Gretel; her voice has a charming clear quality. Mr. Arthur Rackham's dresses were fine, but a little too sophisticated.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

FOR THE DEAD

A LITTLE pink-faced man wearing a bowler hat and a mackintosh over a black suit was hurrying towards the cemetery, carrying a bunch of white chrysanthemums wrapped in newspaper and smoking a stump of cigarette that was half-hidden by his greyish-yellow moustache. A gentle rain was falling, a drizzling misty November rain that clung like dew to the chrysanthemums and like tiniest beads of quicksilver to the man's moustache and his bowler hat. The afternoon would be dark early. The sky was a single vast leaden cloud; the rain was coming a little faster each moment. As the rain came faster the man increased his pace. He carried the chrysanthemums close to his side, furtively, flowers downward, uneasily conscious of them.

The cemetery was deserted. In the distance the rain made a faint vapour, dissolving the white tombstones. The cypress trees drooped heavily and the branches of the leafless almond trees stood black against the sky, delicately laced with odd jewels of rain.

Hurrying, the man went past the public water-tap and the watering-cans and along the wet devious paths among the graves. He walked as though it were all very distasteful to him—the rain, the deserted cemetery, the very thought of placing the flowers on the grave of his dead wife. Yet there was a kind of indifference also in his very irritation, as though he hardly cared whether the flowers were put there or not. He began to walk even faster, anxious to have done with it all.

Coming at last to his wife's grave, a rectangle of white marble enclosing a mound of neglected grass, and without taking off his hat and still sucking the cigarette through his wet moustache, he took the chrysanthemums from their wrapping of newspaper, shook them and dropped them carelessly on the wet grass. On the grass, in a half-rusty green tin vase, stood the chrysanthemums he had put there a fortnight before. Once white, they were now shrivelled and blackened by frost and rain. Straddling the grave he seized the tin, wrenched out the old flowers and dropped them, too, on the wet grass.

Picking up the new chrysanthemums he hesitated. The tin was empty of water. He stood for a moment wondering if he should walk back across the cemetery to the water-tap. It was a long way in the rain. And then suddenly, impatiently, he decided against it. What did it matter? A lot of trouble, a lot of trouble for nothing. The flowers would die in any case. He wanted to get it over.

He hastily picked up the new white bunch of chrysanthemums. But stooping with them he again hesitated.

Down the path, also at a grave, was another man. He was a thin stooping figure and with his black bowler hat and his black overcoat he had the almost ascetic respectability of a tired shop-walker. Like the small man he was middle-aged, and like him also he was arranging a bunch of white chrysanthemums hastily, as though it were very distasteful and he wanted to escape from the cemetery and the rain.

They noticed each other simultaneously, and could not avoid speaking.

"Good afternoon."

"Ah, good afternoon."

They were slightly acquainted and they spoke deferentially, their voices a little embarrassed, and they stood for a moment hesitant, not knowing what to do or what to say.

Then casually the smaller man glanced up at the sky. "I shouldn't wonder if it rained all night," he remarked.

Then, as he lowered his eyes, he saw that the other man had removed his hat and was staring dismally at the rain, as though in thought.

"Ah!" he said heavily. "I shouldn't wonder." He glanced at the other man with secret annoyance for having removed his hat.

There was a silence. Then, after a moment, the small man unobtrusively took off his hat also. His head, very bald, like a bladder of pink lard, seemed to stand out strangely large in the colourless rainy air. Then, as he stood with his head half-bowed, he remembered his cigarette. It seemed suddenly disrespectful and he let it fall from his mouth and it dropped on the wet grass, hissing faintly until he put his foot on it.

They stood there with their hats in their hands and with the rain drizzling on their bare heads until the tall man spoke again.

"You haven't a drop of water to spare," he said, "have you?"

The little man shook his head. "But I was just going to the tap," he said. "I'll bring a can."

"Oh no, I was going myself."

"It seems a pity for us both to go."

The tall man smiled and shook his head with a heavy and deliberate pretence of mournfulness.

"One day we shall have to go," he said.

The little man nodded. "I suppose so," he said, heavily also.

Almost before they were aware of it they were walking down the path together, leaving their flowers on the wet grass. They walked at a slow, almost solemn pace, with their hats still in their hands, as though to a funeral. Now and then they shot furtive glances of secret impatience at each other, each irritably wondering when the other would put on his hat. But neither made a sign, and they walked to the water-tap and back to the graves in the rain without a change of pace, each with a can of water in one hand and his hat still in the other.

Stooping over the graves they arranged their flowers with a kind of deliberate reverence, filling the tin vases carefully, touching the flower-petals with a perceptible show of tenderness. At intervals they half-glanced up at each other, each as though wondering if the other were looking and what he were thinking.

At last they were finished and they stood upright. The thin man had been kneeling and he brushed his hands across his wet knees. The little man could feel the rain constantly falling in larger drops on his bald head and collecting into even larger drops that rolled suddenly, like little balls of ice, down his neck.

They stood in silence, a pace or two back from the graves,

their heads a trifle bowed, in a pretence of grief. They stood there for what seemed to both of them a long time, secretly impatient, staring heavily into space, as though reflecting regretfully on the past and the dead. They had no longer any need to pretend wretchedness. The rain was coming down each moment faster and colder, dripping swiftly down from the wintry branches to the glistening marble tombs and the yellowish muddy paths. Once or twice the tall man ran his hand in concern across his damp knees and the other shook his head slightly, shivering miserably under the cold rain.

At last the tall man gave a sigh as though reluctant to depart, and picked up his watering can.

"Well, it's no use standing here," he said mournfully. He shook his head as he spoke. "No use standing here."

The little man shook his head in melancholy agreement, sighing also.

A moment later, with secret relief, they were walking away together down the path. Unobtrusively the tall man put on his hat and then the small man put on his, too. They walked deferentially, in silence, until they reached the water-tap, where they left their watering-cans.

At the gate they stood for a moment with shoulders hunched against the rain. The rain was falling heavily and the increasing mist and darkness hid the farthest tombs and trees from sight; and suddenly the two men hurried away from each other with angry impatience, as though they had quarrelled bitterly about something and never wished to see each other again.

H. E. BATES

TREES

THEY have harried away the woodland leaves
And bashed a valley to bind their sheaves;
But God, to baptize their brazen town
Will bash their foreheads upon the eaves.

Oh, where do the roads to Hell go down?
Tractor and tar and petrol gown.
Under the reek they stack the corn.
But where are the woods of yestermorn?

HERBERT PALMER

ERNEST BEVIN

THERE are some people who regard Ernest Bevin as the Machiavelli of the Trade Union movement; and there are some who complain that they do not know where he stands. But essentially Ernest Bevin is not a Machiavelli but rather a simple-minded person; and if others do not always know where he stands, that is usually because he is not quite sure himself. This uncertainty arises only on the wider issues of Labour policy; for in the affairs of his own Trade Union Ernest Bevin is usually capable of giving an effective lead. He has been largely responsible for building up the Transport and General Workers' Union, based on an amalgamation of a number of smaller societies, to its present strength and authority in the Trade Union world; and in his mind the interests of his Union, or at any rate its claims upon his loyal service, always come first. This devotion largely explains the apparent waywardness of his attitude upon broad questions of Labour and Socialist policy; for he is apt to be swayed in his general outlook by consideration of what will most serve for the moment his ends as a Trade Union leader.

Yet Ernest Bevin is not only a Trade Unionist and the most considerable leader British Trade Unionism possesses at present; he is also a Socialist, with a long record as propagandist and organiser of British Socialism behind him before he became a national figure. His instincts remain Socialist, with the simple Socialism of those early days; and none was more deeply and plainly shocked than he at the defection of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Lord Snowden in 1931, even though he had been long before that an acute and hard-hitting critic of MacDonald behind the scenes.

These defections undoubtedly had a great effect on Ernest Bevin's attitude. Because these particular "intellectuals" had in a crisis deserted the Socialist cause he became mistrustful of all intellectuals, and especially of those who remained inside the Labour Movement. He became highly critical of "politicians," and inclined to lump them and the intellectuals together in his mind as a body of people against whom it was necessary for the Trade Unions, as the representatives of the man in the street, to assert themselves in the control of Labour and Socialist policy. He was apt in this to forget that the average Trade Union leader is no more like the man in the street than the average politician, and that Trade Union policy and political policy are bound to be affected in different ways by the up and down movements of trade.

At one time Ernest Bevin was regarded as standing politically on the Left, while in the affairs of his Union he tried to hold a steady course between Left and Right. Latterly, he has appeared more than once as an ally of the Right, largely because his distrust of politicians, based on his experience of MacDonaldism, makes him very suspicious of large promises which he doubts the politicians' will or ability to carry out. On this ground he has been a critic of the proposal to nationalise the banks, and again of the programme put forward by the Socialist League. But he does not belong really to the Right, save as a result of his distrust. He would sooner have a Left Wing policy, if he believed it would be carried out.

Personally, Ernest Bevin looks like a "boss," and sometimes behaves like one. He likes the feeling of power, and has a high and justified belief in his own abilities as a leader of men. He has, in fact, great power of leadership, marred at times by indecision at a critical moment. Intellectually, he is extraordinarily quick at seizing a point, but apt, through want of thorough knowledge, which he wants time to gain, to mistake a telling point for a convincing case. His conduct of the famous Dockers' Enquiry in 1920 showed him to possess great ability as an advocate; and in the muddled General Strike of 1926 he, more than anyone else, did seem to be trying to organise and lead the forces which the call to strike had let loose. To-day, his weakness is that he is too disillusioned. He feels the movement was let down in 1926 and again, politically, in 1931; and he has no confidence that it will not be let down again. He lacks George Lansbury's unquenchable faith as well as Arthur Henderson's undeviating persistence. But he is much the biggest man the Trade Union movement has to-day—the only man in it who looks at all like a leader.

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Peer Gynt," at Whitgift

Whitgift is to be congratulated on breaking away from the apparent inevitability of Shakespeare, Sheridan, and Goldsmith as the dramatic fare to be served out to long-suffering audiences of "parents and friends." The tradition founded last year with the production of *Saint Joan* is continued this year with *Peer Gynt*. This play, being episodic, has no obvious "dramatic" appeal, and so imposes a big test on a cast consisting entirely of boys. They rose well to their opportunities, and to many scenes brought real dramatic understanding. But in *Peer Gynt* and *Saint Joan* the real burden falls upon the chief character, and on each occasion a boy has been found equal to the part. As "Peer," J. C. Ireland, helped by a voice of great beauty, succeeded in holding our attention, whether as the robust young stripling of the beginning, the profiteering capitalist of middle-age, or the old man unhappy in having missed the way to true content.

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, December 30th—
Performance of the London Marionette Theatre. Victoria and Albert Museum, 3.

SUNDAY, December 31st—
Gerald Heard on "The Revival of Progress," Conway Hall, 11.

MONDAY, January 1st—
"Success Story," Shilling Theatre, Fulham Road.
Opening of Exhibition of Education in Soviet Russia, University of London Club, 21 Gower Street, 5.30. Until January 15th, from 11—9.

TUESDAY, January 2nd—
Prof. Major Greenwood on "Academic Freedom and the Nazi Revolution," Conway Hall, 7.

WEDNESDAY, January 3rd—
"Reunion in Vienna," Lyric Theatre.
Cambridge Anti-war Exhibition, Rose Hertz Hall, Woburn House, Southampton Row, 12.30—8.30. Also on January 4th and 5th.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

AT Christmas there are the carol-singers, and on Plough Monday—usually the second Monday in January—boys and youths come to the door with blackened faces and begin to sing :

One morning very early
The ploughboy he was seen

Our cook Polly used to be very contemptuous of these degenerate survivals and explain with exasperated scorn that the proper thing was for the ploughmen to come themselves with a plough and that they ought to plough up the doorstep of anyone who did not give an alms. But it was clear that she disapproved of the custom altogether as well as despising the boys, while I was beneath contempt one year for giving sixpences away so freely that we had ploughboys knocking at the front door all day. I could never learn more of them.

* * *

But now Polly's information is supplemented for me by Sir Edmund Chambers in a fascinating book *The English Folk-Play* (*Oxford*, 10s.). Christmas, the New Year and Plough Monday are the season for performances of *The Mummers' Play* which is linked up with the Plough plays of Lincolnshire and The Sword Dances of the North and Pace Egg or Easter plays. In all over a hundred examples of these plays have been written down, for the most part towards the end of the nineteenth century. As might be expected in plays preserved by oral tradition, there are a great many variants and a great many corruptions in the text. Thus *Oh my!* appears for *Home I, act Timothy* for *activity*, etcetera. But such corruptions may be sometimes due to faulty spelling and do not prove the actor did not know the meaning of his words. For example, in the passage : "If you had been true I should of been the same," the error *of* for *have* is one which I have frequently found in manuscripts of educated people, and merely indicates that it was written from the memory of the imagined sound whilst the writer's attention was occupied with the composition of the next paragraph.

* * *

The Mummers' Play itself consists of an introduction by a Presenter, who may be Father (or Captain) Christmas, who calls on St. George (sometimes King George) who is followed by Bold Slasher, who may be called a Turkish Knight, but who is probably a degenerate dragon. This is indicated by his lines :

My head is made of iron
My body is made of steel
My arms and legs of beaten brass
No man can make me feel.

Doubtless it was the difficulty of providing a realistic costume for a dragon which led to his part being taken by Bold Slasher. Elaborate challenges are exchanged, after which a fight takes place and Bold Slasher is slain. The Presenter then calls for a doctor who, with his servant, supplies comic relief before bringing Bold Slasher back to life. Sir Edmund Chambers is rather severe on this, which he calls "purely verbal jesting without salt of mind . . . It is the Folk at its worst." Salt of mind is rare anywhere and is not conspicuous in the other parts of the play, and most of us would laugh heartily enough if we heard the clowns at Olympia, or the two Black Crows, conversing in this strain.

Doctor : Hold my horse, Jack Finney.
John Finney : My name ain't Jack Finney, my name's Mr. John Finney, a man of great strength. Cured an old magpie of the toothache, twisted his old yud off, throwed his body in a dry ditch and drowned him ; I went off the morrow about nine days after, picks up this little yud magpie, romed my arm down his throat, turned him inside outwards and made as good a magpie as ever walked in a pair of pattens.
Doctor : Hold my hoss, Mr. John Finney.
John Finney : Will he bite ?
Doctor : No.
John Finney : Will he kick ?
Doctor : No.
John Finney : Take two to hold him ?
Doctor : No.
John Finney : Hold him yourself then.

Even such simple inversions as : "I met a bark and he dogged at me" seem funny enough if spoken by a good actor. But "in company with all this dross is found the romantic touch of adventure in an earthly paradise," as Sir Edmund Chambers says :

> Now my lads we've come to the land of plenty, rost stones, plum puddings, houses thatched with pancakes, and little pigs running about with knives and forks stuck in their backs crying : Who'll eat me, who'll eat me ?

* * *

The Plough plays, though they usually contain a combat and a cure, are characterised by a Fool's wooing. Frequently an old woman appears with a baby which she says is the Fool's bastard :

Here comes old Dame Jane
Comes dabbling about the Meadow.
Comes Jumping about, to show you such sport ;
Look about you old maids and Widows.
Long time I have sought you,
But now I have found you.
Sarrah, come take your Bastard.

In the Revesby Play, which has the earliest recorded text of any of these plays—1779—the literary merit seems to me much higher, as shown in the following duet between Pickle Herring and Cecily :

P.H. : Sweet Ciss, if thou wilt be my love,
A thousand pounds I will give thee.
Cecily : No, you're too old, sir, and I am too young,
And alas ! old man, that must not be.
P.H. : Thou shalt walk at thy pleasure, love, all the day,
If at night thou wilt but come home to me ;
And in my house bear all the sway.
Cecily : Your children they'll find fault with me.
P.H. : I'll turn my children out of doors.
Cecily : And so, I fear, you will do me.
P.H. : Nay then, sweet Ciss, ne'er trust me more,
For I never loved lass before like thee.
(*Enter Fool*).
Fool : No, nor behind neither. Well met sweet Ciss. Well overta'en.

* * *

Sir Edmund Chambers regards the characters in the plays as being of fairly recent origin and thinks *The Mummers' Play* owes a great deal to Richard Johnson, the author of *The famous Historie of the seaven Champions of Christendome*, printed in 1596, who "furnishes the King of Egypt, the Black Prince of Morocco, and the Soldan." Yet he gives a folk play from modern Thrace, in which plough-shares, a wooing, a combat, the victim of which comes to life again, are the principal features, whilst there are similarities in costume. "That its name is *Haghios Gheorghios* is no doubt a mere coincidence." Its existence, however, is enough to show that the English folk play must be extremely ancient and have a magical origin.

* * *

The folk play may have been influenced in details by the performances of strolling players, and the Ampleforth play contains a rude version of Ben's quarrel with Prue from Congreve's *Love for Love*, while there is a song from *Rosamund*, Addison's opera, in the Mylor play. Sir Edmund Chambers, who says that Father Christmas is probably not earlier than the seventeenth century, refers to Ben Jonson's *Christmasse His Masque* as having popularised the figure of Christmas. But *Christmasse His Masque* is rustic in its essence, and it is as incredible that Jonson could have written it, except as a version of an original, as that Walt Disney could have created the *Three Little Pigs*. I should not suggest as possible that the jingle of a plough play inspired Congreve. But that Ben Jonson was copying a rustic play in *Christmasse His Masque*, with his family of Yule-Log, Mince Pie, Baby-Cake, and the rest, I am convinced.

DAVID GARNETT

NEW NOVELS

Magnus Merriman. By ERIC LINKLATER. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Devoted Ladies. By M. J. FARRELL. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Bredon and Sons. *Collins.* 8*s.* 6*d.*
The Death of a World. By ROMAIN ROLLAND. Translated by AMALIA DE ALBERTI. *Thornton Butterworth.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Clerambault or One Against All. By ROMAIN ROLLAND. *Jackson, Wylie.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Magnus Merriman, the hero of Mr. Eric Linklater's new novel, was one of those simple-minded and strong-stomached individuals for whom the pub-crawl is still an obligatory rite. When he and his friend, Francis Meiklejohn, got drunk, they got drunk on a grandiloquent and aggressive scale; and when they had reached a certain stage of drunkenness it was their custom to quote Racine and Shakespeare and argue lengthily, bitterly and noisily about the comparative merits of French and English dramatic verse, till one of them, coming to the end of his patience and his stock of easily remembered poetic tags, hit the other in the face and both were arrested and haled off to spend the latter part of the evening under lock and key. This happens twice during the course of Mr. Linklater's engaging and vivacious story. On the first occasion, Magnus and his crony graduated from "a noble dram of vodka" to more vodka and thence to bottles of Chablis and claret, all washed down with floods of public-house beer; Magnus, nevertheless, "woke feeling so fresh and healthy as to be quite impenitent for the previous night's excesses. . . . An exquisite sensation of well-being suffused him as he stretched his legs. . . ." On the second occasion, it is true, Magnus is represented as waking up in a more understandable, indeed in a definitely bilious and distempered, frame of mind; for, if the story has a moral, it is to the effect that every pub-crawl, even when illuminated by literary and political discussion, must fade out into the light of common day and that the most obstinate adolescence will show signs of age. Thus, Magnus Merriman, after a long run of boozing, speech-making and philandering, is overwhelmed by an access of the "better nature" that lies in wait for easy-going amorists, marries a sharp-tempered country wench and settles down in the Orkneys on a small, unremunerative farm. Mr. Linklater tells the story of his progress with a great deal of gusto; and the result is a romping, ingenuous narrative which, though written in a tone of almost unqualified joviality, is relieved by flashes of that sardonic humour which has already made a delightful appearance in some of Mr. Linklater's earlier books.

The sad chronicle of Magnus' successive love-affairs is a clever, unkind and extremely diverting piece of work. Unfortunately, the satirist in Mr. Linklater's composition is now and then pushed aside by the rhetorician and author of "fine prose," and among pages devoted to the vicissitudes of various unimportant, but amusing and likeable, characters we stumble on a passage as bombastic and flatulently ineffective as the following—a description of Scottish maidens, seen in Princes Street, Edinburgh:

> It is no muslin prettiness that walks here with the fleet-limbed barrel-chested youth of Scotland, but strong loveliness that can face the wind and keep its colour in the rain. They would not allure the delicate mind, the feeble-luxurious mind, the petty sensual mind that desires soft flesh, provocative warmth, and the titter of prurience; they would frighten the epicene, the pallid tribe of catamites and ingles and lisping nancies; but raiding Vikings would roar with joy and straightway seize them and carry them, scratching like tigers, to their ships.

Whether or no this passage is equivalent to the roar of rutting Vikings, it is also, I am afraid, slightly suggestive of the rombustious eloquence often invoked, in another and less deserving cause, by the dithyrambic authors of railway guide-books; and that Mr. Linklater should have adopted such a mannerism is all the more to be regretted, since his own style when he wields it with proper restraint—he commits, by the way, the common journalistic *faux pas* of using "inferred" in the sense of "implied"—is straightforward, economical and vivid.

Just as Mr. Linklater writes admirably about his native Orkneys, but somewhat less admirably when he is on the subject of urban discussions and dissipations, so Miss Farrell, in *Devoted Ladies*, has given us a remarkably entertaining story of Irish country life, prefaced by chapters about London which suggest that she has drunk rather too deep of the charm of *Vile Bodies* and *Decline and Fall*. The narrative begins with a boisterous and tipsy party. Sylvester, "a very tiresome young man," but rich and brilliant and the owner of an obscurely situated, elaborately furnished flat, had invited, among his other acquaintances, Jessica and Jane—Jessica, masculine, domineering, but prone to fits of worse-than-feminine hysterics; Jane, wealthy, divorced, American, a mere child in her companion's "great white hands," to which their lacquered nails gave "an obscene quality, half flower, half animal." Well, Jessica hurls a champagne bottle and hits Jane on the forehead; Jane develops a severe attack of alcoholic poisoning; and the pair of them, followed by Albert, "the nasty boy who looked after Jane and Jessica with praiseworthy efficiency"—he was particularly fond of trying on their jewels—join an unwilling Sylvester at the house of his Irish cousins, Piggy and Hester Browne. Piggy and Albert share the honours of the story; the fine flower of country-cousindom, charmless maidenhood and repressed schoolgirlish devotion, Piggy is a memorable, touching, accurately observed figure; though Miss Farrell has no more excuse for turning poor Piggy into a downright heroine on the last page than had Dickens for resurrecting Mr. Micawber as a pillar of American society. If Jane is to marry and live happily ever afterwards, Jessica must somehow be removed; but Piggy, in spite of her nickname, was not the young woman to pilot her car, with Jessica aboard, violently down a steep place into the sea and thus clear the stage for a conventional ending. Miss Farrell's treatment of her chief character—the only character in the story who walks and talks; her other characters are shadowy, though always topical—seems lacking both in tenderness and gratitude.

As a comic novelist, Miss Farrell is at her best. Would that her abounding sense of the ridiculous could have been transferred, in however small a degree, to Mr. Neil Bell, author of *Bredon and Sons*, one of those immense family sagas in which length—sheer length—and density and discursiveness of method appear to deputise for every other virtue! Whence does it come, this strange modern conviction, that if a book is sufficiently indigestible it must needs be exceedingly impressive; and that a story which includes a family tree, and traces back it origins to the year 1840 or thereabouts, is necessarily a more solid and lasting achievement, both morally and aesthetically more genuine, than a book of two hundred, or two hundred and fifty, exiguous pages, devoted to the events of a month, a week or perhaps a single summer afternoon? Mr. Bell begins pleasantly enough with a quiet and unpretentious picture of a small East-Anglian fishing and boat-building town. But then Romantic Fiction rears its head; and Mr. Bell has not paused to reflect that, before the Crimean War, even the wildest daughter of a local earl would scarcely have attended a dance, at the age of sixteen, "her slender swaying body tightly sheathed in its dress of old gold," or been allowed to sit out with, and "rain swift kisses upon," the progeny of well-to-do tradesmen. Nor, for that matter, would a strait-laced London solicitor of the same period have left his virgin daughter, "without one single qualm," all alone in the boat-building shop of a young craftsman he had known only for a few days. David Bredon, last inheritor of the Bredon's "wild blood," a disillusioned and cynical modern novelist—he is the author of an improper story called *Slow Stain*—is as chimaerical a creature as any of his forebears.

M. Romain Rolland is an estimable but—let us be honest about about it—an intolerably boring writer. Pacifist and internationalist, there can be no doubt that he is on the side of the angels; but what dull company the angels are, and how very tedious, after a while, their perpetual apocalyptic visions of a world tumbling to pieces and of the hosts of Midian—armament manufacturers, capitalists, jingoes, fashionable dressmakers and the unscrupulous overlords of the popular dress—prowling and prowling around us in dreadful array! We may assent to M. Rolland's gloomy forebodings, and yet feel inclined to protest that, if anything can survive the threatening deluge, as it has survived the downfall of so many previous empires, it is the useless, imperishable flower of art. Let the pamphleteer, then, produce his pamphlets; let the muscular young revolutionary pour out his scorn at the expense of selfish intellectuals still preoccupied with their niggling interminable labours; and let the novelist, unhopeful but unabashed, continue to write novels that are primarily works of the imagination—novels that do not apologise for a fragile thread of story by winding it up in a thick skein of woolly diatribe! *Clerambault*, one of M. Rolland's earlier books, is the story of a pacifist and of his struggles and defeat during the great war. *The Death of a World* deals with the post-war experiences of Annette Rivière and her son, Marc, that "lean young wolf," who bays the moon through the window of a Parisian attic. Europe may indeed be in its death-throes—M. Rolland feels its pulse and shakes his head—but, unless the novelist has done his puppet a grave injustice, it will need more than Marc Rivière to bring it to life again.

PETER QUENNELL

EGYPT

Ismail, the Maligned Khedive. By PIERRE CRABITÈS. *Routledge.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The Suez Canal; Its Past, Present, and Future. By LT.-COL. SIR ARNOLD T. WILSON. *Oxford University Press.* 15*s.*

These two books cover in part the same period of time and sequence of events in the same locality—Egypt. The objects and intentions of their authors are, however, extremely different. Mr. Crabitès, who has already written a fairly good book about Gordon in which his attitude towards some of the protagonists in Egyptian history became obvious, in this volume—as its title indicates—sets out upon one of those whitewashing expeditions now popular among biographers. The reasons why the blacking was originally applied to the good name of Ismail and Mr. Crabitès's formula for superimposing whitewash can be explained briefly. Ismail Pasha became ruler of Egypt in 1863. By 1875 the finances of Egypt were in a state of hopeless insolvency; the Khedive, like the Beys, the Deys, and many other semi-independent oriental and African rulers, had followed the road to ruin opened to them in the nineteenth century by the kind European financiers. There resulted first the usual commissions and missions of enquiry by Sir Stephen Cave, Lord Goschen, and others. After the enquiries the schemes of "retrenchment and reform." Then the inevitable "control"—Sir Rivers Wilson, a distinguished Englishman appointed Minister of Finance in an "Egyptian" Cabinet presided over by the Armenian Christian, Nubar Pasha, and a new loan negotiated with the House of Rothschild. Then friction again—the Khedive with the loan in his pocket kicking against the pricks of control. More enquiries and reports—with the ominous name of Major Baring attached to the last report—one last struggle to escape on the part of the Khedive, and finally, an ultimatum from the French and British Governments and Ismail, Khedive of Egypt, on June 26th, 1879, abdicates in favour of his son, Muhammad Tewfik Pasha.

Such was the bare history of the Khedive Ismail. In the course of it, many of the commissioners of enquiry put the blame for the bankruptcy of Egypt upon the profligate extravagance of Ismail. The same charge has been made by Major Baring (afterwards Lord Cromer), Lord Milner, and Lord Zetland. It is sufficient to examine the blacking as applied by Lord Cromer: Lord Cromer maintained that Ismail added on an average £7,000,000 a year for thirteen years to the public debt of Egypt, and that of the £91,000,000 which he borrowed, the whole of it, with the exception of £16,000,000 spent on the Suez Canal, "was squandered." It is this charge which Mr. Crabitès sets out to remove with his bucket of historical whitewash. His formula consists partly in denying the accuracy of the figures and partly in trying to prove that much of the money was not "squandered." My sympathies are on the Khedive's side and against the international money-lenders who brought ruin and misery upon Egypt, Tunis, and many other Asiatic and African princedoms in the nineteenth century. But I do not think that Mr. Crabitès succeeds in attempting to substitute whitewash for blacking. The real defence of Ismail is not to try to show that he did not squander the millions that he received from the financiers and oppress his unfortunate subjects in order to squeeze money out of them to pay for his extravagances—because in fact he obviously did. Lord Cromer's and Lord Milner's figures of his expenditure may not be exact, but that is because the Egyptian finances and system of bookkeeping were in such a state of chaos that it is impossible to know exactly how many millions Ismail did get rid of. The point is of no importance, because it is quite certain that he did receive and spend enormous sums, that he did reduce Egypt to bankruptcy, and that Lord Cromer's and Lord Milner's figures are as likely to be as near the truth as Mr. Crabitès's. Mr. Crabitès's second line of defence is even more unconvincing. For instance, Ismail spent incredible sums of money in bribing Turks in Constantinople, from the Sultan downwards, and in buying birds, dogs, cows, and other animals at extravagant prices in Paris to present to the Sultan. The correspondence between Ismail and the agent of his corruption in Constantinople which Mr. Crabitès quotes from the Egyptian archives is extraordinarily interesting and amusing and the best thing in his book. But really when he argues that this expenditure was not "squandered" or extravagance, but a wise economy since otherwise Ismail would have had to go to war with Turkey, the whitewash seems to be wearing much too thin.

It is not unfair to say that Sir Arnold Wilson's ultimate object is blacking. He has written a useful and well-documented history of the Suez Canal. But the history leads up to and is intended to support his thesis, namely, that the monopolistic control of the Canal by a concessionary joint-stock company, which operates for its own private profit, is an anomaly and anachronism. He argues that the Canal dues are much too high and are a great handicap to British trade, and he draws an interesting comparison in this respect between the Suez and Panama Canals. He maintains that Disraeli's purchase of the shares of the Khedive Ismail—a direct result of the events dealt with by Mr. Crabitès—was a complete failure, for it has, in fact, never given the British Government any control over the Company's policy. The Canal reverts to Egypt in 1968 when the Company's concession expires, and the ultimate aim should be to provide by international agreement that when the time comes the Canal should be administered thereafter not for the profit of a small number of shareholders in Paris and London, but in the interests of international transit and trade. Meanwhile, Sir Arnold Wilson proposes that the British Government should sell its shares in blocks to private persons or bodies. Owing to the peculiar régulations with regard to voting power, these bodies and persons would then obtain the control of the Company which the British Government, owning the shares in one block, does not possess. There are obvious dangers in this proposal, and a government which really was determined to protect international and British interests in the Canal could probably do so with considerable effect in other ways.

LEONARD WOOLF

SWIFT AND JOHNSON

The Life and Friendships of Dean Swift. By STEPHEN GWYNN. *Thornton Butterworth.* 18*s.*

Jonathan Swift: a Critical Essay. By W. D. TAYLOR. *Davies.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Samuel Johnson. By HUGH KINGSMILL. *Barker.* 10*s.*

These three books provoke more reflections on the practice of biography than I would care to set down, even if I had the space and opportunity. It would be unfair to say that any of the three is bad, but only one, Mr. Kingsmill's, really fulfils what is the first requirement of a book, that it should justify its existence. Both Mr. Gwynn and Mr. Taylor write agreeably about Swift, though Swift is the last subject for merely "agreeable" writing, as he was pre-eminently an uncommonly disagreeable man. Mr. Gwynn, it is true, will barely admit that. If it is beyond even his powers to present a Swift who is all sugar and spice, he does his best to persuade that the flavour is not so *very* harsh after all. Mr. Taylor seeks to distract us with such alluring glimpses of the obvious, as that Pope was wrong in likening Swift to Cervantes and Rabelais, and Fielding hardly less wrong in likening him to Lucian. His essay is very neat and scholarly, but even less than Mr. Gwynn does he ever come to grips with his subject. Neither author is likely to have to complain of the peculiarly irritating piece of critical cant that is apt to be flung at any biographer of a man of letters who makes the mistake of regarding his subject as a human being. There is a recognised formula: "These things are no doubt very interesting in their way, but are they edifying or necessary? After all, the real man is to be found in his works. What does it matter if, etc., we can read, etc.?" For some reason this protection is only extended to literary artists. Anything true may be said of a painter or a musician. But the moment a great writer's life is in question we have the vicar's honeyed accents hastening to prevent the vicar's wife's acid query, "Was he a *good* man?"

No biographer of Swift can give any illumination of that tenebrous spirit if he shirks the fact that he is dealing with a pronounced neuropath who in his old age became a definite and even dangerous lunatic. There is nothing discreditable, either to author or subject, in making such an admission. It can detract nothing from the man's genius, but it may account for much that is perplexing in it. What is discreditable is, if not an actual denial of the fact, the suggestion that it does not matter greatly. When, long after his body has rotted, a man lives by his spirit, we are entitled to consider what manner of spirit it was that once informed that corruption and by what devils it was tormented. The devils of a man's life are as much facts as anything that can be set down in *Who's Who*.

It is for this reason that Mr. Kingsmill's short—rather too short—life of Johnson is admirable. Here was another neuropathic subject, a miserably unhappy soul who has been condemned

to live for posterity as a first-class entertainment because of his excellent table talk and his many eccentricities. We seldom pause to think what was implied in Johnson's fondness for company and hearing the sound of his own voice, that they were his only anodyne for the agonies of introspection. He was by nature a profound melancholic, whose life in its incidents afforded little to relieve and much to aggravate his condition. He was for most of his life desperately poor and bitterly able to appreciate the words of his favourite satire of Juvenal :

> Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se
> Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.

Like most melancholics he was incurably indolent and resentful of sustained effort, and his consciousness of this failing increased his melancholy, which in turn confirmed his " accidie." He was ugly, and would have been quite ugly enough even if the criminal negligence of his parents when he was an infant had not disfigured and half-blinded him for life. He was incapable of presenting a reasonably clean and decent appearance, was of uncouth gait, and was the victim of grotesque nervous " tics " that nowadays would be seen with pain, though in his own day they seem to have been regarded as great fun. If he had been physically feeble as well there would have been no hope for him, but, fortunately, he had the bone and muscle of a Smithfield porter and was not afraid of showing it upon occasion. There is nothing that can strengthen the spirit like the knowledge that with a single blow you can lay a fellow sprawling in the kennel.

The special value of Mr. Kingsmill's book is that it recognises what, owing to the influence of Boswell, has hitherto been neglected—the essential sadness of Johnson. He was not a John Bull disguised in pedant costume. He was much more like Dominie Sampson, if one can imagine a Dominie Sampson with a first-class brain. It would be absurd to deny the brilliance of Boswell's presentation of him; but, if brilliant, it is not invariably scrupulous, and above all, as Mr. Kingsmill points out, it is unfeeling. Undoubtedly Boswell had all the admiration that he eternally professes for " my venerable friend," but admiration does not necessarily imply sympathy or even ordinary decency, qualities of which Boswell was notably devoid. Mr. Kingsmill accuses him of deliberately teasing Johnson, as a picador teases a bull, in order to get copy for the marvellous book he was going to write when the bull was safely dead. The accusation is perfectly just, but the comparison is too dignified. Boswell had not the courage of the picador; he was only rich in the thoughtless malice that enjoys tying a tin-can to a dog's tail.

The best testimonial to Mr. Kingsmill's study is that it will surprise those who have hitherto enjoyed him as an exuberant and not infrequently irreverent wit. They will find here nothing but candour and sympathy—a difficult combination—admirably expressed, a picture of a man of humble spirit whose only arrogance was towards stupidity and folly and who yet would suffer even a fool gladly in return for a little affection, a man who was not an inspired buffoon, but a hero, or, perhaps more truly, a saint. Even Boswell knew that, and if his method of canonisation is queer it is at least effective. Sympathy, after all, was not much in his line. He did what he could—made a painstaking and, according to his rather dubious lights, honest record and left the rest to posterity and Mr. Kingsmill. DONALD CARSWELL

ENGLISH PAINTING

English Painting. By R. H. WILENSKI. *Faber and Faber.* 30*s.*

An Introduction to English Painting. By JOHN ROTHENSTEIN. *Cassell.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

A Short History of English Painting. By ERIC G. UNDERWOOD. *Faber and Faber.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

A Short History of Painting in England. By MILES F. DE MONTMORENCY. *Dent.* 6*s.*

A prejudice persisted until two years ago that where painting was concerned short introductions were written for the illiterate half-wit, and should take the form therefore of mere paraphrases of accessible information and opinion. The literature of the French Exhibition showed that it was possible with wit and scholarship to provide an approach to painting which because it was not merely factual could combine a general and a specialised appeal. It taught us to expect an individuality of observation and a sense of contour to which none of the books published so far this year on English painting consistently attains. The development of modern English painting was rapid and retarded, and the English tradition consequently has a unity and continuity which French painting cannot claim. For two hundred years and more painting in England was virtually synonymous with portraiture, and one can trace therefore that fascinating thing, the creation and expansion and decay of a tradition, more simply and more logically than in any other country outside Italy. This general aspect of their subject these books do not emphasise, and with their failure to do so goes a parallel failure to exploit its literary potentialities. Not only is English painting more consistently literary than that of any other school, but the courses of English painting and literature provide associations and analogies which it is unwise to ignore. We cannot understand Hogarth save as a product of the period of Steele and Richardson, Pre-Raphaelitism with its indifference to material is inseparable from its literary background, Raeburn's work is meaningless if we divorce it from Scott's Edinburgh. The great merit of the English figure-painter is that where he is not pictorially even of second-rate interest (and that is the case more often than we care to recognise) his work as a rule provides a complete reflection of his period. For one painter who merely gains from historical treatment we have twenty who are inexplicable without it. What is more serious, however, than the thinness of texture of these books is their general deficiency in scholarship. It is unreasonable apparently to expect occasional writers on English painting to show acquaintance with recent work on the Wilton Diptych or with other (and better) Academy lectures than Sir Joshua's.

Mr. Wilenski, though his book is episodic, brings to his subject a freshness and honesty that enables him to break down for better or worse many estimates that have become dangerously repetitive. He dismisses Hoppner in a sentence in order to make way for an interesting paragraph on Hussey, he discusses poor Romney (who seems destined to come in for some hard knocks at the Exhibition) in terms of Blake rather than of Reynolds, while his pages on Wilson are authoritative and illuminating. His book has obvious defects. Its attitude is unswervingly romantic. " In some cases," Mr. Wilenski writes of portraiture, " the artist, in others the sitter, is the victor," and he identifies the second of these categories quite correctly with the " still-life " portrait-painting against which Hogarth directed his invective. But Hogarth's phrase was applicable merely to individual contemporaries—Jervas, say, and Hudson and perhaps Mr. Wilenski's *bête noire*, Zoffany. To use it to support a condemnation of Alfred Stevens at one end of the book and of Cornelius Johnson at the other (and by implication, presumably, of all linear portraiture) is quite absurd. Whatever one may think of Stevens, he was not a bad painter because he refused to paint like Reynolds, and Stuart painting similarly is not to be condemned because it is not Georgian. This application of an inapplicable standard makes sections of the book inadequate and prejudiced, and accounts for Mr. Wilenski's odd reiteration of the myth that " the history of English painting properly begins with Hogarth," since we can form no " general idea " of English painting before the sixteenth century, while " the English paintings surviving from Tudor and Stuart times are nearly all hack portraits by second or third-rate painters imitating the brilliant foreigners who worked here in that period." Where two constructions can be placed on given facts, Mr. Wilenski can be trusted to adopt the more unpleasant. Reynolds becomes " quite clearly an arrivist, a humbug and a snob," while the universal doubt that is the keynote of the earlier chapters makes even Matthew Paris appear positively lurid. But a point of view that is frequently perverse is better than no point of view at all, and with all its faults this is a book which deserves the strongest recommendation. Mr. Wilenski's sense of proportion and selective power make it probable that it will remain the most interesting book on English painting for some time to come.

The one unpardonable sin in a popular introduction to what is intended presumably as a popular exhibition is the substitution of an official and traditional for a personal reaction and the refusal to emphasise that the contemporary character of all good painting automatically subjects the reputation of the painter who is dead to the same criticism and revaluation that the painter who is living periodically undergoes. Criticism of the past is not heretical, and unless the English Exhibition offered an opportunity for disentangling the artist from epithets that time has made meaningless it would be hard to justify. The object of the introduction should be to stimulate interest rather than to supply a veneer of information. The strength of Mr. Wilenski's book is that it is supremely stimulating. Mr. de Montmorency,

Mr. Underwood and Mr. Rothenstein on the other hand aim at producing old-style introductions, concise, comprehensive and conventional. The work of all three emphasises the foolhardiness of any attempt to deal simultaneously with pre-Tudor and post-Tudor painting. Mr. Rothenstein clings too closely to Mr. Borenius's coat-tails to make his first sixty pages anything more than an unimpressive and not very well synthesised parade of second-hand scholarship, which the excellence of much of the later part of his book, and particularly of his studies of Hogarth and James Barry, renders all the more regrettable. His work is accurate and where its adherence to its sources is least literal it is extremely interesting. It is in no sense a re-estimate or an interpretation. Its proportions are scrupulously academic, its judgments for the most part clear and commonplace. Academic proportions may be justified, academic judgments cannot be so condoned. Mr. Rothenstein's book is an excellent presentation of material that was threadbare long before he began to work on it.

Mr. Underwood on English painting is like a child reciting Shakespeare. His work is unassimilated, unemphatic, and without the merit of unvarying accuracy, a compendium of well-worn anecdotes retailed in an exasperatingly didactic tone and selected with an unfailing eye for the irrelevant. He would have done well to realise before producing such a book that where space is limited fact, genealogical fact particularly, is insignificant once it is separated from the deductions which can be, and have been, based upon it.

Mr. de Montmorency's little book is at once less pretentious and more profound. It is sober and suggestive, and though its format will probably prevent its being treated as seriously as it deserves, it is just about as good as a handbook to English painting can be.

JOHN POPE-HENNESSY

THE ETON SCHOLARS

College at Eton. By ERIC PARKER. *Macmillan.* 7s. 6d.

This book is a history of the seventy King's Scholars who since 1846 have been housed in New Buildings then erected in addition to the existing Long Chamber so as to give most of the scholars separate rooms. Maxwell Lyte's History by no means excludes the Scholars; but as from 1846 the Collegers (*gens togata*) have kept more written records of their doings and acquired a more corporate consciousness. If similar books have not been written about the Scholars of Winchester (seventy of whom came to found Eton) and of Westminster, it is to be hoped that they will one day be written.

The general public, more familiar with Eton Oppidans, such as Mr. Gladstone, may regard the interest of this book as slightly esoteric, though even College succeeded in the eighteenth century in producing Sir Robert Walpole and Lord Chatham. Some old Collegers may even lack the enthusiasm of Mr. Parker for the Wall Game which fills so many of these pages, though the Field Game is obviously better than any other sort of football and derives some characteristics from the Wall Game.

However, the Eton Colleger has played a very distinct part in the history of Eton, and in later life has achieved a great deal of useful, if often unobtrusive, work in public and professional life quite apart from distinction earned in scholastic and academic circles. Apart from the esoteric records of names and games the history of College Pop (the debating society) is perhaps more likely to interest the general reader.

Mr. Parker finds it difficult to define public opinion which, as he says, is not always newspaper opinion or the opinion of readers who write to the newspapers. He claims, however, that public opinion of the time does find expression in the debates of College Pop, but that it is more often an echo of the family circle than of the contemporary newspapers. It is interesting to find that on November 8th, 1862, in a debate on the subject of public opinion, only seven in the House out of eighteen voted for execution in private. Six years later, in 1868, it was carried by twelve votes to six that public executions were preferable to private, and one of the members said that he had once seen an execution. Also in 1868 a motion to do away with flogging in the Army was lost by five to thirteen.

In four debates between 1872 and 1882 Darwin's theory of evolution was on each occasion rejected by a majority, and it was not until 1888 that the society admitted by a majority of one that there might be something in the Darwin theory. The principal interest of these debates is that in a society composed of more than unusually intelligent boys, their opinion was far from being in advance of their time.

The author mentions some debates on cremation, in one of which Mr. Hugh Macnaghten took a very strong line against the practice. This is interesting considering that he was afterwards cremated and, no doubt, many of the speakers subsequently altered their opinions, although the present editor of the *Times* may still be of the same opinion as he was in November, 1892, that "advertizements are not pernicious, but disagreeable." I remember myself finding a speech by the most illustrious of living Collegers who said that anyone who smoked must necessarily defile his mouth and throat just as a chimney is defiled by soot. In later years I have often watched this gentleman smoking with an apparently contented unconsciousness of the defilement which he denounced in his youth.

On one point I can instruct the author. He writes on p. 158 that he cannot find any record of the Boating Men's Handicap before 1898; but I remember that the first race (which started as a rag in an idle half-hour) took place in March, 1896, when I won it. At the end of the Summer Half of 1896 I presented the College with a challenge cup for the winner of the race, which I saw some years later in the rooms of a Colleger called Smith Gordon. It was the custom for Collegers when leaving to present books to the library; but my offering of Henry Fielding was refused, so I gave the challenge cup instead. Apparently Mr. Parker has not seen it. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

E. S. P. HAYNES

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT

The Progress of International Government. By DAVID MITRANY. *Allen and Unwin.* 5s.

The recent setback to internationalism at Geneva makes it most important to explore the foundations of this great experiment in the light of its historic origins and to consider how it may best be amended. Dr. Mitrany in this able and thoroughly informed book traces the pre-nationalist unity of Europe under the Roman and the Holy Roman Empire, and the emergence of State separatism under the influence of the Reformation, with the establishment of absolute sovereignty under divine right. Machiavelli and Hobbes saw the State making its own morality by its own force. Though the conception of international law with an ethical basis was expounded by Grotius and other jurists, it had little bite on actual policy. The internationalism of the French Revolution was soon lost in the struggles for national solidarity and democracy which occupied the nineteenth century.

Though considerable advances have been made both in international law and in cosmopolitan co-operation for m n c n-

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veniences and safeguards, a hard-shell national sovereignty still blocks the way to any effective inter-state policy of peace and economic community. The first difficulty is that of converting the principle of equality of States into a working system of internationalism. Equality before the law, equality of rights, cannot properly imply equality in the administration of the law, for the capacity of different States to take part in international government will differ widely, and a sane "equality" must take these differences into account.

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In a chapter discussing "Authority in the World of States," Dr. Mitrany argues the case for sanctions. Effective internationalism must have power to enforce its judgments. What power? He inclines to support the sufficiency of economic boycotts. But can economic boycotts be made effective without ultimate recourse to force? And, in order to operate, do not they require that all important nations are within the League and obedient to its behests? It is no fault of Dr. Mitrany that his book furnishes no satisfactory solution of these problems. It is one of his chief merits that he brings them out clearly into the light of day. J. A. HOBSON.

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counterpart in Russia, its principal master, El Greco, going West instead. As for Bolshevism, Mr. Byron is repelled, not as a die-hard—he is anything but die-hard—but as a humanist repelled by political and religious monomania, as an artist repelled by the octopus of industrialism. Calvin was humorous, Torquemada tolerant, in comparison with the priests of Bolshevism, for priests they are, its prophets having already departed. Nor can there be any corrective, for the intervention of the Allies, and their subsequent press campaign, has accentuated the mental isolation from which Russia always suffered. Flattered by the tribute of hatred paid to his revolutionary gospel, the Russian has come to regard himself as the sole repository of progress; yet his naive worship of machinery—a new marvel in the most unmechanical of countries—merely recalls the craze of industrialism which afflicts so many newly fledged Asiatic states, or at best that rapturous panegyric of factories and railways which Macaulay wrote, in the language of an artist before the Parthenon. But whereas England under the Industrial Revolution worshipped the Golden Calf, present-day Russia not only regards the successful man as anti-social, but actually hates talent, persecuting the educated class not because it was once disloyal but because its very existence is opposed to the equalitarian dogmas of the Revolution. If the Five-Year Plan fails, it will not be for lack of the capitalist incentive—there are other incentives in life—but because of the incredible atmosphere of fear, the perpetual espionage which paralyses all initiative and responsibility, and this, too, in a country already notorious for its incompetence. Amid much that is suspiciously brilliant in his analysis, Mr. Byron here rings true, for terrorism long antedates Bolshevism, being indeed the chosen instrument of other Asiatic governments, just as apathy and fear are characteristic of so many Asiatic races.

Mr. Byron's visit to Tibet has not even the connection of continuous travel; he journeyed by the usual route, Lord Beaverbrook paying his air-passage to India; but it has the merit of antithesis—in Russia the Industrial Revolution is finding its grim apotheosis, Tibet is immune; Russia is a provocative caricature of the West, Tibet is unrelated. Here again Mr. Byron is eminently readable, and he gives us a magnificent photograph of the Gyantse Plain, but this is about as far as he got, and he says little that is really new. He insists on admiring an abortive expedition of some years ago, as if the facts were not sufficiently established. And, although everyone must echo his prayer that unspoilt backwaters may long be spared from the irruption of Western influences, many a reader will be irritated by clichés about "the spiritual emptiness of Western civilisation, masked by an assumption of moral superiority." Alas! *hubris* is not confined to the West, and if generalisations are permissible for areas the size of Europe and Asia, it would be less untrue to say that Europe is spiritual, Asia materialist, for much of what strikes the newcomer to Asia as religion is mere religiosity, and much of her asceticism is enforced by poverty.

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SPEECH DISORDERS

Speech Disorders. A Psychological Study. By SARA M. STINCHFIELD. *Kegan Paul.* 10s. 6d.

This is a book which deals systematically with the study of speech disorders. The subject is important, partly because a proper understanding of speech disorders is of diagnostic value from the psycho-pathological point of view. The book is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the classification of speech disorders, their causes and treatment. The classification attempted here is extremely comprehensive, but it is somewhat unfortunate that the investigators find it necessary to introduce such a large number of unfamiliar terms, and the interests of standardisation can sometimes be carried too far in this respect. Though certain terms, like *logorrhea* and *megaphonia*, explain themselves, other technical expressions are a little bewildering: for example, *logokyphosis* for word-deafness and *trachyphonia ecclesiastica* for hoarseness due to clergyman's sore throat. There is an interesting and well-illustrated account of the different types of cleft palate and the disorders of speech which they cause. The organic pathological conditions responsible for speech defect are enumerated and also the psychological causes: the prominence given to these latter is a special feature of the book.

The second part deals with statistical studies of women with speech defects compared with control groups of normal women. Several interesting points emerge, many of which result from answers to questionnaires. About three-quarters of the largest control group expressed themselves dissatisfied with their speech, and almost exactly the same proportion of the group singled out for speech correction expressed themselves likewise (p. 178). Similarly, those with speech defect were just as anxious to sing, debate, take part in plays, and so on, as the control group. Evidently speech defect is insufficiently recognised as a disability by the individual who possesses it. Some of the statistical results are based on numbers too small to be helpful. To describe three persons out of four as seventy-five per cent. does not increase the statistical significance of the result (p. 228). Some interesting figures are given comparing the rate of reading and scholastic ability. On the whole there is little indication that oral reading rate is correlated with scholastic attainment except within groups of specially slow readers. The book will probably help to awaken interest in the problems affecting adolescents and children who are handicapped, economically or socially, by speech difficulties. The number of such children is asserted to be surprisingly large.

L. S. PENROSE

SHORTER NOTICES

Sherry. By H. WARNER ALLEN. *Constable.* 5s.

Mr. Warner Allen describes the making of sherry from the slow gathering of the ripe grapes on the chalky Alberiza soil behind Jerez, to the final blending of the products of different *soleras*, themselves already highly blended wines, by the shippers. The making of sherry is characterised by the addition of gypsum to the must and by a double fermentation, the second of which takes place in butts with a large air-space over the wine and the bungs out. An English visitor was horrified to perceive at this stage "floating upon the surface of the wine something I can only compare to small native oysters taking a swim without their shells." This *mycoderma vini* was carefully studied by Pasteur in the Jura—the only wine-making district outside Spain where it is found—and Mr. Warner Allen had the curiosity to follow in the great scientist's footsteps, and from a study of *Arbois* wine to throw further light on sherry. The *mycoderma vini* shuts off oxygen more effectually than a sealed cork and its action results in a weakening of the alcoholic content of the wine. But once the *mycoderma* has done its work, the wine will keep for ever—being in this respect unique among wines. Many points in the making of sherry are the same as the ancient Roman methods, and Mr. Warner Allen recalls that Pliny describes tasting a wine 200 years old. The book is admirably written and the description of the vintage is particularly delightful.

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Suns and Worlds. An Introduction to Astronomy. By W. H. STEAVENSON. How and Why Series. *Black.* 2s. 6d.

No one could be better fitted than Dr. Steavenson to write this simple account of the universe. Himself an alert astronomer, he has the gift of making his subject attractive and intelligible to the least learned of audiences. The young (or older) reader who is not looking for technical explanations, but hopes for a good plain understanding of what goes on in the heavens, will find this book admirably suited to his needs. It contains fewer figures, measurements and diagrams than any elementary text-book (which indeed it does not claim to be), yet it touches on and elucidates all the points that the average lay reader might be inclined to worry over. If he has heard conflicting theories about an expanding universe he can here find out what the term implies and on what degree of fact the assumption of it is based. He can also disentangle to-day's theories of stellar evolution from yesterday's, and learn without pains the significance of "white dwarf" or "Cepheid variable." The first chapter, called "The Earth as a Viewpoint," is built on the excellent idea of at once "placing" our globe in relation to the celestial world, and therefore placing our angle of discovery. Not only has Dr. Steavenson made his account easy, interesting and concise, but he is able, too, to blend humour and accuracy with admirable economy of phrase, as when he refers, in discussing stellar evolution, to a star's "red old age."

The Egyptians. By S. R. K. GLANVILLE. How and Why Series. *Black.* 2s. 6d.

There is a lustre about Egyptian antiquities that can brighten the sternest museum on the foggiest day. Mr. Glanville, who is the Assistant Keeper of those in the British Museum, has preferred to give, in this introduction to the subject, some of the plainer facts behind the gorgeous effects in faience, paint or granite. Government and private life, professions and trades, sculpture and architecture are glanced at. Dynastic history and, still more, the vexed question of chronology are perhaps wisely left undiscussed, but it will be a disappointment to many to find religion and morality dismissed with the words, "on the whole, Egypt was backward." Interpretations other than the purely material one may attach to the Egyptian family of gods; and why should we term as "backward" an ancient race that conceived a resurrection myth long before the Christian era? It is disappointing too, that where so many genuine drawings are available the illustrations to Mr Glanville's book should not be reproduced from these. Instead, Miss Pearl Binder has supplied line drawings of Egyptian figures, which, effective enough in themselves, would hardly have deceived the artists who decorated the walls of the rock tombs.

Celebrities and Simple Souls. By ALFRED SUTRO. *Duckworth* 12s. 6d.

Alfred Sutro, unhappily, did not live to see this book published; but he could not have left behind him a memorial more characteristic of the geniality and generosity that throughout his life brought him so many friends. In this story of the people he had met and known he keeps in the background; nevertheless to those who can read between the lines it is curiously autobiographical; for if ever it was true that a man may be judged by his friends that man was Alfred Sutro. Here he tells us just enough about himself, his early career in business and his later success in dramatic authorship, to explain the wide range of his friendships. The book is packed with good stories and shrewd and kindly character sketches, some of the best of the former being at his own expense.

About Motoring

OUR BARBAROUS MOTOR-HOUSES

THE majority of privately owned motor-cars are still most inefficiently housed. Most of them are kept in sheds designed for other purposes. Of those which are sheltered in modern erections sold for the purpose, 90 per cent. occupy cheap frame buildings, fitted with cheap improvised flooring, and devoid of any heating apparatus. If a man spent £500 on the purchase of a good picture, and proceeded to stack it in a damp cellar, we should question his sanity. It is hardly less foolish to store an expensive motor-car in a damp, cold garage. The average owner gives little or no thought to the storage of his car, except from the standpoint of cost, under which he usually selects the cheapest accommodation within range; or occasionally amidst the severities of winter, when starting difficulties make him sigh for a warmed house. His attitude is that a car of some sort is almost a necessity to him; that his finances are strained to the uttermost in the purchase of the car; and that he cannot afford to be fastidious about his motor-house. This is all true of owners who are compelled by dire fate to live in a particular house, or possibly in a particular locality where no modern property exists; but if ideals are ventilated and accepted, a day comes sooner or later when they can be translated into practice. So let it be roundly stated that no motor-car should be kept in an unheated garage; when the advantages of heat are analysed owners will presently find that some form of heating is ultimately possible. A cold, damp, motor-house is destructive both of the outward appearance and the mechanical condition of any car. Damp and cold are injurious to the plated metal, to the enamel, and to the upholstery of a car; they cause it to look shabby at a premature age; they undermine its second-hand value; and they create much additional labour for the owner who takes pride in the condition of his car. In addition they are unhealthy. It is, for example, undesirable that a medical man, roused from a warm bed to attend a confinement, should be chilled by crossing a cold yard in winter, entering a cold shed, and sitting in a cold car. If he can enter a warm car without quitting his residence, his physique will undergo less strain, and he will arrive at the patient's in much better condition. Similar reasoning applies to all weakly and elderly people who use cars in daylight only. Mechanically, the absence of heat is much more serious. The bulk of the wear on the pistons and cylinders of an engine occurs whilst the parts are cold. Corrosive chemical elements are liberated from the fuel during prolonged efforts to start a cold engine; water is condensed; and other deleterious processes are rampant. In mid-winter the starting of a large engine in a cold garage imposes genuine mental and physical strain on the owner; many lives have been shortened by the task, since it is dangerous for men over forty to operate a starting handle to shear oil films; a few people are annually killed by the exertion; many catch chills through heavy perspiration, followed by cooling off in the night air; and any big hospital can display broken wrists due to handle starting. The destruction of accumulators is a comparatively trivial element in this indictment; but every electrical station is filled at this time of year with car batteries under charge, which have been removed from their cars because the dynamos have failed to replace the current spent in prolonged or fruitless attempts to start the engines. All these troubles are either abolished or vastly reduced if a car is stored in a warmed motor-house. If an owner is prepared to carry out his own routine repairs, adjustments and attentions, from greasing to decarbonisation, the provision of heat in the motor house may produce an actual cash economy. Few owners will spend three or four hours decarbonising an engine in a cold motor-house in mid-winter; but many men will do the work with their own hands if the motor-house is warmed, and if it is large enough to leave comfortable room to work. On every conceivable count, therefore, all motor-houses should be heated.

This ideal is most simply and cheaply attained when the garage is built into the dwelling house as part of the ground floor. It will then have but two outside walls at the most, and its temperature would in any case be raised by conduction of heat from the warmed living rooms on the ground floor. It can also be supplied with electric light from the house mains. If the house does not possess central heating, a plug and flex permit heat to be applied in the motor house during bitter weather without any risk, and at a minimum of trouble. If the owner considers his power bills too closely to keep an electric stove alight in his garage through the winter nights, he can install a more economical heater in the form of a bonnet lamp or one inside his radiator. Alternatively, a safety oil heater can be employed at less cost, but with rather more work and trouble. If the dwelling house is centrally heated, an extra radiator in the garage, with a control tap, adds practically nothing to his fuel costs.

When these ideals are impossible, the owner should not lightly discard the idea of heating the motor-house in winter, especially if his health is poor, or his heart elderly, or his engine a reluctant starter. His local supply station can furnish details of a great variety of heaters, ranging from miners' safety lamps for use under the bonnet to slow-combustion stoves which entail very low fuel charges. All these improvisations will pay for themselves in actual cost, since they will prolong the life of his pistons, cylinders, and accumulators; and the slight labour involved in operating them is preferable to the inconveniences and exertions of wrestling with a cold engine.

When a house is being built with an integral garage the dimensions should not be skimped. The motor chamber should be large enough to accommodate as big a car as is likely to be owned during the tenancy of the house, with ample room all round the vehicle for work to be done. The floor may be either smooth or corrugated. A corrugated floor keeps the tyres clear of oil drippings, but is less easily cleaned than a smooth floor. A washing floor is desirable outside the door, and water should be laid on, with due provision against freezing of the water pipe. R. E. DAVIDSON

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CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 53.—ALICE'S EXAMINATION

Some girls were examined for a secretarial post. The examiner distributed ten marks among the girls taking part in respect of each subject of examination. He gave each girl at least one mark in each subject; noting that, by a curious coincidence, the number of subjects of examination was equal to the number of ways in which the ten marks could be distributed, when each girl's minimum of one was taken into account. He noted also that each possible distribution of marks figured in the final table.

The result showed that no two girls had obtained the same total mark. But each competitor (except, of course, the top one) had obtained only one mark less than the girl next above her.

The examiner, in view of the closeness of the result, ordered a second and more difficult examination. One girl, however, retired, bored with the whole affair. The others were examined on precisely the same lines as before. Once again ten marks in all were distributed in respect of each subject; once again each girl, in respect of each subject, was awarded at least one mark; once again the number of examination subjects was equal to the number of different distributions of the marks; and once again each possible distribution was attained. Once again, finally, only one mark—taking the examination as a whole—separated each unsuccessful candidate from the girl next above her.

Alice took the top place in both examinations; how many marks did she score in all?

PROBLEM 51.—DUDPORE

A little simple algebra, for once. But it is extraordinary how many solvers write of "logarithms," "prolonged trial and error," etc. Neither should be necessary.

Let a be the Ranee's age at her engagement.
Let b be the Ranee's age at the marriage.
Then $a^5 + b^5 = 9\,382\,481$
But $a^5 + b^5 = (a + b)(a^4 - a^3b + a^2b^2 - ab^3 + b^4)$
Factorising 9 382 481,
$a + b = 41$ .. .. (1)
$a^4 - a^3b + a^2b^2 - ab^3 + b^4 = 228\,841$
But $a^4 + 4a^3b + 6a^2b^2 + 4ab^3 + b^4 = 2\,596\,920$ (from (i))
i.e., $ab(a^2 + ab + b^2) = 519\,384$.
$= 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 2 \cdot 3 \cdot 17 \cdot 1273$
Which at once suggests $a = 17$
$b = 24$.

Hence the Ranee was 17 at her engagement and 24 at marriage, *and has been engaged for anything between 6 and 8 years.*
(I have accepted seven years as a solution.)

PROBLEM 50.—THE RAINBOW ELECTION.

A set of Low's Cartoons goes to Mrs. E. Sandbach, 146 Salisbury Road, Moseley, Birmingham.

There were 57 correct and 22 incorrect solutions. *Seven* points are awarded for this problem.

TO SOLVERS

I have devoted the last few days to clearing up correspondence which of late has been very heavy and was sadly in arrears. I hope that I am starting the new year with all outstanding queries answered.

WORD SQUARE

I will give a copy of the *Playtime Omnibus* for the first solution opened.

ACROSS.

1. Now pitched am I, now struck.
2. I bring the heathen luck—
   (Thereat, at least, he aims).
3. Weary perhaps, or dress.
4. Comes back before, I guess;
   Now sullen, now in flames.

DOWN

1. Summon (or town in France?)
2. Sum on? No! Take a chance
   On entrance, not much used.
3. Each day begins anew.
4. Submission ought to do—
   Pale, but a bit confused.

PLAYTIME DINNER

Arundel Hotel, off the Strand, at 7.30 for 8 on Thursday, Jan. 11th. A good attendance is already assured. Tickets (5*s.* inclusive except for wines) from S. T. Shovelton, King's College, Strand, W.C.2.

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM BOOK

is now on sale. Published: T. De La Rue, 110 Bunhill Row, E.C.1; price 6*s.* The book runs to 344 pp. and contains 105 problems, with full solutions. There is a small "solvers' edition" bound in half-calf and interleaved with writing-paper; I shall be glad to send particulars to anyone interested. CALIBAN

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

THE AMERICAN SILVER PREMIUM.

THE fact that the World Economic Conference could come to no definite agreement on any subject except silver may have suggested to those of a cynical disposition that it was a subject of no importance. Let us therefore retain our sense of proportion when we applaud the Santa Claus generosity which President Roosevelt has shown to American silver producers on ratifying the world silver agreement. The American Government has decided to buy 24,000,000 ounces per annum at a price of 64½ cents an ounce (the pre-Christmas price being 43 cents) as its contribution to the stabilisation of the silver market. As the American producers only are entitled to the fixed price of 64½ cents the London market, apart from a temporary spurt, moved only fractionally higher at 18⅞*d.* an ounce. Under the world agreement, which is to last for four years from January 1st, 1934, the silver-producing countries (U.S.A., Mexico, Peru, Canada and Australia) undertook not to sell any silver, but to withdraw 35,000,000 ounces from the market between them. The American purchase of 24,000,000 ounces per annum withdraws the whole of their domestic production which, on the 1932 figures, represented nearly 15 per cent. of the world mining output, or 10½ per cent. of the world supply (mining output plus sales of stocks). The weakness of the world agreement was the inadequate restriction on the liquidation of existing stocks. India, whose stocks then amounted to about 380,000,000 ounces, undertook to limit her sales to an average of 35,000,000 ounces per annum during the four years, but her sales were only 23,500,000 ounces in 1932. One half of the American purchases is to be coined (negligible as a potential inflation measure, for it would involve an addition of only some $15,000,000 to the American currency) and the other half is to be held in reserve. Thus, unless it proposes to introduce bimetallism into its currency, the American Government will accentuate the underlying weakness of the silver market—the existence of Government surplus stocks. Of course, President Roosevelt may be intending to bring before the next world monetary conference a proposal for an international gold-silver currency with the restoration of debased silver coinage to its pre-war fineness and the authorisation of silver as part of the reserves of the Central Banks. World action along these lines would certainly improve the world price of silver. But failing international action on bimetallism, the Roosevelt Christmas-box to domestic silver producers must be regarded as stabilising the votes of the "silver bloc" in the U.S. Senate, rather than the world market in silver. This is the view of everyone in London except Sir Henri Deterding and the silver producers.

* * *

The idea that there should be an advance in the price of silver prior to or over and above an advance in the world price level is dangerous nonsense. It is based on the fallacy that silver has been a major factor in the world depression and that the purchasing power of China has been restricted because silver is its principal store of wealth. If we may repeat the argument which we used six months ago when the World Economic Conference was considering this question, the wealth of China consists not of silver hoards, but of the capital assets by which production for export and internal consumption is made possible. These capital assets are almost exclusively land, with a certain amount of manufacturing plant in the International Settlements. It is true that if China had vast hoards of silver an increase in the price of silver would increase her purchasing power abroad, but we have it on the authority of the Chairman of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank that the hoards of silver in China are inconsiderable. Moreover, there is no relation between silver hoards and banking credit in China as there is between gold stocks and bank credit in this country. The slump in the price of silver has on balance assisted the silver currency countries by stimulating their export trade. It is a rise in the prices of silk and other export produce, not of silver, which will restore prosperity to China. No silver producer appears to realise that as China usually has an export surplus which is settled by the import of silver any rise in the gold price of silver would mean that less silver would be required to balance China's trade, unless a rise in the prices of her export produce increased her export surplus. We see, therefore, no importance in securing any rise in the price of silver except in step with a rise in world commodity prices. Nor, we imagine, does Mr. Roosevelt, the economist. But Mr. Roosevelt, the politician, is quite another man.

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